B-7-4
F. 47 2. 133

THE SCRIPTURES
Genuine Interpreter Asserted:
OR, A
DISCOURSE
CONCERNING
The Right Interpretation of *Scripture.*

Wherein a late Exercitation, Intituled,

Philosophia S. Scripturæ Interpres,

Is Examin'd, and the Protestant Doctrine in that point Vindicated.

With some Reflections on another Discourse of *L. W.* Written in Answer to the said Exercitation.

To which is added,

An *APPENDIX* concerning Internal Illumination, and other Operations of the Holy Spirit upon the Soul of Man. Justifying the Doctrine of Protestants, and the Practice of Serious Christians, against the Charge of Enthusiasm, and other unjust Criminations.

By *JOHN WILSON*, M. A.
Sometime of *Kath. Hall* in *CAMBRIDGE*

In the Savoy: Printed by *T. N.* for *R. Boulter*, at the Turks Head in *Cornhil*, over against the *Royal Exchange*. 1678.

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Genuini Scripturarum Interpretis Aſſertorias,

In debitæ Gratitudinis & Obſervantiæ Teſtimonium,

D. D. D.

Joannes Wilſon.

A Prefatory Addreſs to the READER.

Courteous Reader,

IT is not any pleaſure in Polemick Diſcourſes that hath engaged me in this Conteſt. A Work of this kind is ſo far from affording me any true delight, in theſe declining years of my life, that if ſo concerning a Truth as I have here endeavoured to defend, had not call'd for a ſeaſonable Vindication againſt the aſſaults of a Daring Adverſary, I could, with much more eaſe, and better ſatisfaction to my ſelf, have ſat down with ſilence. I cannot but think, that by all, who take the Holy Scrip-

tures for the Infallible Word of Truth, given us of God to be our Rule of Faith and Life, the Point under debate will be judged so important, as to be a sufficient Apology for my Attempts: and what I have perform'd therein, is humbly submitted to the Judgment of the Candid and Ingenuous. But perhaps it will be accounted somewhat strange and incongruous, that I should, in the English Tongue, encounter with what hath been written in another Language. And I acknowledge, that my Self judged the Exception so considerable, that it occasioned some debate within me, and had certainly made a change in my former Intentions, were it not that, as I understand by the publisht Writings of some Reve-

Reverend Divines abroad, what miſchief this Authors Diſcourſe, and ſome others, whoſe Publication it occaſioned, have already done in the *Netherlands*; ſo I am not without juſt fears, that thoſe unſound Notions and corrupt Principles, that are, by this means, ſcattered abroad, may be quickly (if they be not already) propagated amongſt our ſelves; former experience having given us too great an aſſurance of the unhappy influence that Foreign Theology, in ſundry points of moment, hath had upon Engliſh Minds, that are apt enough (with thoſe *Athenians* of old) to liſten after τι καινότερον, ſome new thing. Acts 17. And my aim in this preſent Writing being principally the good of my own Country-men, the greateſt

greateſt part whereof do better underſtand their own Language than another; I accounted the Objection leſs valuable, and ſo reſolved to proceed. But whereas I have here and there reflected upon ſome paſſages in the Diſcourſes of *Ludovicus Wolzogen*, as they came in my way, I give my Reader to underſtand, that this ariſeth not from any prejudice againſt the Perſon of that Noble Author, to whoſe Honourable Parentage and excellent Learning I ſhall ever render all due reſpects. But finding him to have ſo plainly injured the cauſe he undertook, and ſo unhandſomely treated our moſt eminent Proteſtant Authors that have with much Judgment and Solidity defended it; I am hopefully perſwaded

ſwaded that thoſe few Animadverſions which I have made upon his Writings, will not be unacceptable to the Friends of Truth. The intricacy and perplexedneſs of his Diſcourſe, hath put me to ſome pains to underſtand his meaning: for I have not ſatisfied my ſelf with a ſlight or tranſient view: but have peruſed his Book over and over with intenſeneſs of mind, that I might be ſure not to miſtake or miſrepreſent him. And I hope it will appear to the Unprejudiced, upon conſulting his Book, and comparing mine with it, that I have done him right. One Advertiſement more I muſt add: *viz.* That my Citations out of the ſaid Authors Book, *De Scripturarum Interprete*, relate to a ſecond Edition of it, as it ſtands

ſtands before his *Cenſura Cenſuræ:* and threfore the numbers of the Pages cited, are not thoſe on the top of the Leaf, but thoſe in the Margin, relating to the firſt Edition, which I ſuppoſe (for I have not ſeen it) was Printed in a leſſer Volume.

A Brief Summary of the Contents of the Discourse about the Scriptures Interpreter.

The Introduction,

WHerein the Question about the Interpretation of Scripture is propounded, the Terms explained, and the following Dissertation divided into two Parts.

The First Part,

That Reason and Philosophy are not the Scriptures Interpreter.

Chap. 1. *THe Terms explained, and the Controversie stated.*

2. *The first Argument, from the condition of depraved Reason.*

3. *Exceptions against the former Argument removed.*

4. *A second Argument, from the Disproportion between Humane Reason and matters of Divine Revelation; An Exception against it answered.*

5. *A*

5. *A third Argument, from an abſurdity following thereupon.*
6. *A fourth Argument, from another great abſurdity.*
7. *A fifth Argument, from the inconvenience of opening a gap to the worſt of Errors.*
8. *A ſixth Argument, from one great end of Scripture-Revelation.*
9. *The contrary Arguments examined; the firſt from the multiplicity of ſenſes in the Scripture.*
10. *A ſecond, from God's being the Author of Philoſophy.*
11. *A third, from the ſuppoſed ſufficiency of Philoſophy.*
12. *A fourth, from the nature of a clear and diſtinct perception.*
13. *A fifth, from the ſuppoſed practice of former Divines.*
14. *A ſixth, from inſtances in ſome conſiderable Scripture-Aſſertions, ſuppoſed not Interpretable without Philoſophy.*
15. *A ſeventh, from the Reaſonableneſs of Religion.*
16. *Scriptures alledged by our Divines vindicated.*

17. *No contrariety between Scripture and ſound Philoſophy.*

The Second Part,

That Scripture is its own Interpreter.

Chap. 1. *THE Doctrine of the Reformed Churches in this point clear'd.*
2. *The firſt Argument, from the Scriptures ſufficiency; the firſt branch,— the Scriptures perfection.*
3. *A ſecond branch of the Argument, the Scriptures perſpicuity.*
4. *An Exception againſt the Scriptures perſpicuity from the ambiguity of words, removed.*
5. *A ſecond Exception removed.*
6. *A third Exception removed.*
7. *A fourth, from the ſuppoſed difference between the ſimple ſenſe of the words of Scripture, and the true ſenſe of the Author, removed.*
8. *A fifth and ſixth Exception removed.*
9. *A third branch of the firſt Argument, the Scriptures Authentickneſs, urged, and an Exception removed.*
10. *A*

CONTENTS.

10. *A second Argument, from the Scriptures being the Rule of Faith.*
11. *An Exception against this Argument from Reason, being part of the Rule of Faith, disproved.*
12. *An Exception from the Scripture taken materially and formally, removed.*
13. *Several Objections against the Scripture being its own Interpreter, answer'd.*

The Conclusion,

Reflecting upon some passages in the Exercitators Epilogue.

The

The Introduction.

1. *AN Entrance made into the Discourse. The Question about the Interpretation of Scripture propounded, and the Terms briefly explained.*
2. *The Rule of Interpretation distinguished from the Means, which are many and various.*
3. *The Doctrine of the Romanists concerning the judgment of the present Church, and that other about the consent of the Antients, lightly touch'd, and passed by.*
4. *The Protestant Doctrine in this point, what it is; and the contrary Novel opinion of a late Exercitator. The following Discourse divided into two parts.*

§ 1. THE Holy Scriptures being designed of God to be the Revelation of his Will to the Children of Men, for their conduct in the pursuit of their chief end; we cannot but

judge it consentaneous to his unsearchable Wisdom, to order the Writing of them in such a manner, as that his Mind, in them, might, in the due use of his appointed means be understood by those, for whose use and benefit they were intended: And though the subject matter they treat of be often very deep and misterious, yet the way of proposal is very condescending; and what ever is of necessity to our duty and happiness, is obvious to the diligent and humble Inquirer. Nevertheless many passages in these Sacred Records have those difficulties in them, that may exercise the study of the ablest understandings. Now in our searching out the Mind of God in Scripture, especially in those darker places, the question is, what course we are to take, and by what Rule we must be guided, that we may not bewilder our selves, or wrong the Scriptures by our mistakes?

To prepare the way for a Resolution of this Question, I must briefly premise somewhat touching these three Terms, the *Scripture*, the *Interpretation*

on of Scripture, and the *Rule* of that Interpretation.

The *Scripture* we ſpeak of, is the entire Volume of Holy Writ, containing all thoſe Books both of the Old and New Teſtament, that are generally acknowledged to be Canonical. Whereby I mean, not the Words or Phraſes of Scripture taken ſingly by themſelves; but as they are conjoin'd in Propoſitions or Sentences; and as thoſe Propoſitions ſtand in ſuch a contexture, and with ſuch a dependence on and relation to what goes before and after; and as in this Frame and Order they are the Inſtrument of declaring the Mind of God to Men. Now, whereas the whole Scripture, though it have the ſame Divine Original, and be directed to the ſame ultimate end, yet contains in it great variety of Matter, Doctrine, Hiſtory, Propheſie, *&c.* It is the two former that we are eſpecially concern'd in; and therefore ſhall wave the Prophetick part (what is yet unfulfill'd) further than it may fall in with any of the other; the beſt and

moſt convincing Interpreter of Propheſies being the event, unleſs God ſhould beforehand unfold them by extraordinary Inſpiration; which we have not in our days any ground to expect. It is therefore the Doctrinal and Hiſtorical parts of Scripture that I chiefly intend in this Debate.

Interpretation is either Verbal or Real. The former is all one with that which is commonly called Tranſlation. This I ſhall not meddle with, further than as it is a neceſſary requiſite to the latter; which is uſually called Expoſition, which is the opening of the true Senſe of Scripture, or unfolding the Mind of God ſignified to us by thoſe Words and Sentences of Scripture that we are ſearching into. Now we here ſuppoſe two things, which to a ſober and conſiderate Reader need no proof. Firſt, That the Scriptures are not a heap of inſignificant Words, or unſens'd Characters, as ſome late Romaniſts, who cry up Oral Tradition for the only Rule of Faith (ſo great is the power of prejudice and partial Intereſt)

tereſt) have ridiculouſly and profanely affirm'd: but that they have a true ſenſe *Originally* and *Eſſentially* in themſelves, given them by their Author when they were firſt indited. To deny or queſtion this, were to impute that to the moſt Wiſe God, that common Civility forbids us to charge upon any man of ordinary underſtanding. Secondly, That the Senſe of Scripture is fixt and immutable, not varying with the times, or altering according to the differing practice of the Church: which was moſt abſurdly aſſerted by Cardinal *Cuſanus* in *Epiſtola contra Bohemos*; as I find it atteſted by many credible Authors * the Senſe of Scripture is no other than what it always had, and ever will have to the Worlds end.

The next thing to be conſidered, is the Rule of Interpretation: By which we can underſtand no more than the Meaſure, by agreement or diſagreement to which we judge of the Senſe of the Scripture, whether it be right or wrong, whether it be indeed (what it pretends) the true Senſe of the Scripture

* *Flac. Illy. Cl. Scr. parte. 2. Gerard. Loc. com. de Int. Scr. cap. 2. Glaſſ. Philol. lib. 2. pag. 280.* And. *Rivet. Iſagog. cap. 18.*

pture under Inquiry, or a miſtaken Senſe unduely faſten'd upon it. Or, in fewer words, the Rule of Interpretation is that which gives us the objective Evidence by which the true Senſe of Scripture is diſcern'd, and for which it is received.

§ 2. Here let it be obſerv'd, that it is one thing to inquire what means we are to uſe in ſearching out the Senſe of Scripture, and another what is the Rule that muſt guide us in determining what that Senſe is. For though the Rule he alſo a Means, yet every thing that is to be uſed as a Means, hath not the place of a Rule. The Means are many, the Rule but one; underſtanding it not of any ſubordinate or Miniſterial Rule, but of that which is Supream and Autocratorical. For that is the Rule under our preſent inquiry.

The Means ſubſervient to the Interpretation of Scripture, are either General or Special.

The General are two, Meditation and Prayer.

1. There

1. There must be a fixed intending of the Mind to consider of what we either read in, or hear from the Scripture; and of whatsoever we meet with that may help us to understand it. This the *Psalmist* speaks of, as the daily practice of every Holy-Blessed Man, *Psal.* 1. 1, 2. and professeth it of himself, *Psal.* 119, 15. 97.

But, secondly, there is need of Prayer also for Divine Assistance to enable us to understand the Mind of God aright. This the *Psalmist* used, *Psal.* 119. 18. 19, 26, 27, 73. Though he had the Copy of the Law by him (according to that command of God which we have upon Record in *Deut.* 17. 18, 19.) and did use daily to read it and meditate on it; yet he thought not this enough, but begs of God to have his Eyes opened, *&c.* When our Saviour discoursed with his Disciples after his Resurrection, concerning Himself and his Sufferings, it is said, *Luke* 24. 45. that he opened their Understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures. He did not only open the

Scriptures by External Inſtruction, as it is ſaid before, *verſ.* 27, and 32. But (as the Learned *Grotius* obſerves upon the place) he opened their Minds by the Internal Illumination of his Spirit. This the Apoſtle prays for in the behalf of the *Epheſians* and *Coloſſians* (*Eph.* 1. 16, 17, 18. *Col.* 1. 9.) though they had the Doctrine of the Scripture already publiſhed to them. And the ſame Apoſtle writing to *Timothy*, having exhorted him to conſider what he had ſaid to him, he adds this Prayer for him, *The Lord give thee underſtanding in all things*. I would gladly ſuppoſe there are none that call themſelves Chriſtians, but do own the need and uſe of Prayer for the underſtanding of Gods Will: which neceſſarily carries with it an interpretative acknowledgement of the need we have of ſomething from God, above our natural abilities to underſtand the Scriptures. And I do profeſs my ſelf to have had the better and more honourable eſteem of that great Schoolman *Thomas Aquinas*, ſince I read this of him, that it

was

was his manner, whenſoever he was either to ſtudy in private or diſcourſe in publick, to pray fervently to God for aſſiſtance, that he might learn of *Him*, what he was to teach others; and that he did candidly acknowledge in ſecret to his intimate Friend *Reginaldus*, that what Divine Knowledge he had, was attained by Prayer, more than by any humane Wit or Labor.

Lud. Croc. præloq. in S. Theol. c. 3. ex Ludov. Granatenſis.

But whoſo expects ſucceſs in ſeeking Divine Aſſiſtance, it behoves him to bring with him a meek and humble Heart, awed with the holy fear and reverence of God and of his Word: For want of which too many have greatly polluted theſe Holy Myſteries with the wanton conceits or prophane excurſions of an unhollwed Wit; and mortally poiſoned themſelves and others, by their corrupt handling this Bread of Life.

The Special Means of Interpretation are two-fold. Some are more remote, which I ſhall only name, not intending any Diſcourſe about them, becauſe my work lies another way.

Theſe

These remote helps are. 1. Some competent knowledge of and recourse to the Original Tongues, wherein the Scripture was first penned, with a due observation of the proprieties of each Language. 2. Skil to discern between the proper use of the Words and Phrases of Scripture, and that which is Tropical and Figurative. In these, *Grammar* and *Rhetorick* have their use. 3. Some insight into the peculiar Laws, Customs and Proverbial Speeches of those times and places that the Scripture relates to: which requires some knowledge in History. There are sundry passages both in the Old and New Testament, that have respect to the known Customs of the Gentiles, as in their Divinations, Idolatrous Worships, Publick Games, and many more that have relation to the peculiar Rites and Modes of speech in use among the *Jews*. So that there is no part of Phylology but may have its use in the Interpretation of Scripture. 4. There is great use of the several parts of Phylosophy, not only *moral*, but *natural*; for

for the clearing of many things in Scripture, that are of natural cogniſance; as about the ſtructure of Mans Body, and the faculties of the Soul; the nature, motion, and influence of the Heavenly Bodies, the temperament of the ſeveral Regions of the World; as alſo about the Elements and Meteors; about Numbers and Meaſures; the Nature and Properties of ſeveral Creatures, Beaſts, Birds, and Plants; and many other things treated of in the Bible, either by way of Hiſtory or Parable. 5. Logick hath alſo its uſe here, for the better diſcerning the dependence of one thing in Scripture upon another, and collecting of one thing from another.

The more immediate Means are chiefly two, 1. A due obſervation of the ſeveral circumſtances of the Scripture to be Interpreted; who it is that ſpeaks, where, & when, and to whom, & upon what occaſion. Here alſo comes in the conſideration of the coherents with antecedents and conſequences, together with the ſcope and deſign of the Speaker:

all

all which are of great use to discover the Sense of Scripture. 2. Comparing Scripture with Scripture, or consulting other Scriptures whether paralel with, or seemingly opposite to the place under consideration.

Now to the use of all these forementioned Means or Helps, both General and Special, Remote and Immediate, I think all agree. But about the Rule of Interpretation there is not so universal an accord.

§ 3. The *Romanists* for the most part will have this Rule to be the Judgment of the present Church, meaning their own. But I shall not deal with this. It's weakness, in what Sense soever taken (for they agree not among themselves) hath been sufficiently discovered by the worthy labours of many, both formerly and of late *.

* Dr. *Stillingfleet*, Dr. *Tillotson*, Mr. *Pool*, &c.

Some few there are, who tell us, that the Scripture supposes the Rule and Summary of Religion delivered from one Age to another, which we are to be guided by in searching out the meaning

ing of Scripture. And this Rule, they ſay, is to be found in the Monuments of the Church, that is, in the Writings of the Fathers, and Determinations of Councils; from whence we are to receive the Senſe of the Catholick Church, and thereby know what was the Doctrine delivered by Chriſt and his Apoſtles in the firſt Age; and according to that interpret the Scriptures. But if this muſt be our way of proceeding, we may very well deſpair of ever underſtanding the Scriptures, except when they ſpeak with ſo much plainneſs, that they ſtand in need of no Interpretation.

For what a heap of uncertainties muſt we lay for the Foundation of our Faith? It is ſufficiently known, that the Fathers do oft differ from each other, and many times, are not conſiſtent with themſelves. Councils have determined contrary one to another. And ſome things that were (as far as appears to us by all extant Monuments of Antiquity) agreeable to the common Sentiment in our Age, were laid aſide

aſide in another. Beſides, either the far greateſt part of the Doctors of the Church in the firſt Ages wrote nothing, or their Writings are loſt: and of thoſe that now go under venerable names, many are plainly ſpurious, and many dubious; nor is it eaſie in ſeveral of them, for the moſt ſagacious Reader to find out the right. Inſomuch as we cannot have any tolerable aſſurance what was the conſentient judgment of the Catholick Church in any one age about the whole Doctrine of Faith, if we ſet the Scriptures aſide. Therefore to frame ſuch a Rule of Interpretation as this, is no better than to build a Houſe of Straw upon a running Stream. There were very few Writers in the two firſt Centuries; and in the two following not very many: and after this the Church did much decline, and degenerate as well in Doctrine as Manners. Now ſuppoſe we were ſure that the Writings in each Age were undoubtedly theirs whoſe names they bear (as it is paſt doubt we are not) who can aſſure us, that what

what was publiſhed by thoſe few, was the conſentient Judgment of all, or the major part of the Doctors of that Age wherein they lived? Might there not be a greater number differing from them, who either wrote nothing, or whoſe Works are periſhed? The plain truth is, That this way of Interpretation does in the upſhot reſolve the Faith of *Chriſtians*, not into the certain authority of the Divinely-inſpired Writings, but into the fallible Teſtimony of the moſt uncertain Tradition. But for the Readers further ſatisfaction, I refer him to *Monſieur Daille's learned Treatiſe about the right uſe of the Fathers*; a Piece of that worth, that the Lord Vicount *Falkland*, and his dear Friend Mr. *Chillingworth*, did highly eſteem it, and made great uſe of it in their Writings againſt the *Romaniſts*; as we are informed by Mr. *Tho. Smith* (ſometime Member of *Chriſt*'s Colledge in *Cambridge*) in his Epiſtle prefixed to the *Engliſh* Tranſlation of that excellent and elaborate Diſcourſe: who further alſo tells

us,

us that we have in that Tractat, a ſufficient Confutation of Cardinal *Perron* his Book againſt King *James*, and by conſequence of the Marquis of *Worceſter* againſt King *Charles*; and of Doctor *Vane*, and other Epitomizers of the Cardinal, which I do the rather take notice of, that it may obviate the groundleſs prejudices that ſome have of late entertained againſt that Incomparable Piece.

§. 4. The received Doctrine of the Reformed Churches, both our own and thoſe abroad hath been hitherto, that the Scripture is its own Interpreter. But of late there hath been an attempt to juſtle the Scripture aſide (as to this uſe) and place Reaſon and Philoſophy in its room. There is a Belgick Exercitator, who hath written a ſet Diſcourſe to this purpoſe. In the entrance whereof, he tells the World, That for the extricating of himſelf out of thoſe perplexities wherein Divines generally are intangled in their Expoſitions of Scripture, he reſolved upon mature deliberation, to make uſe of the ſame method

Philoſophia S. Scr. Interpres, Exercitatio Paradoxa.

In Prologo.

thod in Theology that *Des Cartes* had done in Philoſophy, and profeſſeth that ſuppoſing Scripture for the Rule of Faith, all the difference in opinion among Dogmatical Divines (as he calls them, in oppoſition to Scepticks) appears to him to ariſe from hence, that none of them could certainly and infallibly prove their Interpretations of Scripture: and that after long inquiry, he found this to be the onely ſure and infallible Rule of Interpretation which himſelf had now found out; *viz.* the principals of Reaſon, and dictates of Philoſophy. And in this new way (which he glories in the invention of) he profeſſedly declares his diſſent from Papiſts, Proteſtants, Socinians, and Remonſtrants. But he bends his greateſt force againſt the Reformed Churches, endeavouring with all his might to invalidate what they unanimouſly maintain concerning the perſpicuity of the Scriptures, and the ſingularity of the literal Senſe, and eſpecially about the Rule of Interpretation. For thus like

Ib. cap. 5. par. 1.

Cap. 16. par. 8.

a *Miles Glorioſus*, he begins his tenth Chapter, *Devictis velitari brevi; pugna imbellibus iſtis*, &c. *Having by a light and eaſie skirmiſh ſubdued theſe weak and feeble Enemies* (meaning the *Romaniſts*) *let us now march another way, and draw up our Battalia againſt thoſe of the Reformation, and all that fight under their Colours.* And in the ſequele of his diſcourſe, he hath gratified none ſo much as the Church of *Rome*; as in his poſitive proof (ſuch as it is) of his novel Poſition, he hath not a little befriended the *Socinian*; though he would ſeem to divide himſelf from them both. However, both in the Aſtructive and Deſtructive part of his Book, he is a declared Adverſary to the Proteſtant Cauſe.

For my more orderly proceeding, I ſhall divide my enſuing Diſſertation into two Parts; in the former whereof I ſhall deal with this Exercitator's new Device [of Reaſon and Philoſophy being the Scriptures Interpreter] diſproving it, and anſwering ſuch arguments as I find alledged, or imagine may be

be alledged for it. In the latter I ſhall endeavor to clear and aſſert the Proteſtant Doctrine [of the Scriptures being its own Interpreter] and anſwer the objections againſt it.

THE SCRIPTURES Genuine Interpreter asserted, &c.

PART I.

Humane Reason or Philosophy no sure Interpreter of the Holy Scriptures.

CHAP. I.

1. *The Proposition denying Reason and Philosophy to be the Scriptures Interpreter, laid down, and the Terms explain'd.* 2. *How far they have their use, and what we deny.* 3. *Who they are that have ascribed too much to them.*

§. 1. *Ph. Scr. Int. c. 5. par. 1.*

FIrst then, I assert against the Exercitator's Position *; *That Humane Reason, or Philosophy is not to be admitted or allowed as the sure and sufficient Interpreter of the Holy Scriptures.* For

For our more clear proceeding, it is requisite I should explain my meaning before I come to the proof of my Assertion. Let it therefore be considered, That Reason may be three ways taken.

First, For that power and faculty in Man whereby he is enabled to apprehend, judge, and discourse of such objects as are presented to his understanding. Now this falls under a two-fold conception, according to the two-fold state of Man, Innocent or Fallen. Mans Reason as it was originally, when God first made him, was pure and clear, not clouded or blinded, not depraved or distorted, there was nothing to darken or disturb it. It was then a glorious Beam streaming forth from the Eternal Light. But Mans Apostasie, as it vitiated his other faculties, so it benighted his Reason, and exposed it to further depravation by the prevalency of disordered Passions and sinfull Lusts. Yet even in this state his Reason is not lost, though it be much corrupted. I am far from that late Authors mind, that says, * *Quæ fallet, aut falliter ratio, minimè ratio dicenda.*

* *Lud. Walzog. in Censura Censur. p. 59.*

dienda. Reason that deceives, or is deceived, is not to be called Reason. Mans Reason, notwithstanding its pravity, is still kept in a Capacity to understand his greatest Concerns, by the assistance of those gracious aids that God affords him; and hath in all ages been of great use for the good of Mankind, in reference both to mens personal and politick affairs. Therefore I need not fear to say, that next to Holiness, Mans Reason is his greatest Glory.

Secondly, Reason is taken for the exercise of this intellectual Power, in inquiring, discovering, comparing, judging objects propounded. It is by these actings of our Reason that we search after Truth, and make use of it when we have found it, for the conduct and comfort of our lives: and by these it is that we defend the Truth of God against Gainsayers.

Thirdly, It is taken for the Principles of Reason, known or knowable by natural light. And these are either Natural, or Acquired. The Natural or Pri-

Primary Principles of Reason are those that carry their own evidence with them & therefore upon the first representation, are forthwith embraced by our Reason, without any Discourse. And they are called Natural, not as being *formally* imprinted, or properly engraven in our Minds by *Nature* (for we are not born with Actual Knowledge) but because they are *founded* in, and do necessarily *result* from the Nature of things and their mutual Respects, wherein as in a Glass, our Understanding sees them represented, and is disposed to assent to them at the first view. The Secondary or Acquired Principles are those which are not so obvious as the former, but by rational Discourse, are truly and soundly deduced from them.

And here falls in the consideration of Philosophy, which is made up of these Principles methodically digested. And by it I understand that true knowledge of God and his Works which is attainable in this mortal state, by the improvement of that Light that is Connatural to the Mind of Man.

This, though it be much inferiour to Scripture-Light, yet it is both an exerciſe and an advancement of Reaſon; a noble Study, and of excellent uſe if rightly managed, not only for the beautifying, but the bettering the Mind of Man, and raiſing it to an high admiration, and humble adoration of that Infinite Being, whoſe Wiſdom, Power, and Goodneſs is ſo eminently conſpicuous in all the Works of His Hands. And if there be any ſuch in the World (as ſome ſay there are) that deny or reproach ſound Philoſophy, or the Dictates of Right Reaſon, as I know them not, ſo neither ſhall I plead their cauſe.

§ 2. Now as to the Caſe before us,

Firſt, It is undeniable, That for the Interpreting of Scripture, there is a neceſſary uſe of the Faculty of Reaſon, and the ſeveral actings of it, as inſtrumentally ſubſervient to the finding out the Senſe of Scripture. Faith doth not exclude Reaſon, but elevate and advance it by giving it a clearer light;

light; it doth not silence, but regulate and conduct it. There is nothing in Religion but what is perfectly rational, and suitable to mans intellectual nature. It is to our Rational Powers that the Scriptures are propounded: and as our belief of them is one of the highest acts of Reason, so it is by our Reason in its due exercise that we search into them, not only to find out the signification of the Words and Phrases of Scripture, and discern the difference between proper and Figurative Expressions, besides many other things that tend to their Verbal Exposition; but likewise to observe the dependence of one Clause on another, and compare the several parts of Scripture together; thereby it is that we gather Consequences from Scripture-Principles; and hereby do we instrumentally judge of the Mind of God, as signified to us by the Words of Scripture.

Secondly, We also grant, That the Principles of Reason have their use about those things in Scripture that are discoverable by Natural Light; as

as that there is a God, and that God is to be worshipped; that the Soul is Immortal; that good is to be done, and evil to be avoided; and many such like. But even in these, considered as they are delivered by the Spirit of God in Scripture, I think Reason is not Magisterially and Authoritatively to Judge of them, being (under this notion) to be received as the Decrees of a higher Court, wherein Man's Reason is but a Servant. In this Case therefore, Reason only gives in its suffrage, and ministerially subscribes, by vertue of its own impressed notions to Scripture-Dictates. *Aquinas* propounding a question about Mans believing such things as may be proved by Natural Reason; resolves it necessary for Mens more speedy, more common, and more certain attainment of Divine Knowledge, that they should receive by Faith, not only those things that are above Natural Reason, but those also that are discernable by Natural Light. Whereby he plainly gives the pre-eminency to Revelation above Reason, even in the

Aqu. 2. 2ᵉ. Q. 2. a. 4.

the Natural Principles of Religion.

Thirdly, I grant that there is great uſe of Natural Principles in points of pure Revelation, *viz.* To ſhew that theſe are not againſt ſound Reaſon, and to diſprove the objections that are made againſt them from a pretended contrariety to Natural Light. It was no ſmall advantage to the *Chriſtian* Cauſe in the Primitive Times, that the Ancient Fathers in their Apologies for the Doctrine of *Chriſt*, againſt the Heathen Philoſophers, turned their own Weapons upon them, and repelled their abſurd Cavils by their own acknowledged Maxims.

Fourthly, I further grant, that no Senſe of Scripture is to be admitted for genuine, if we do indeed find it to be certainly inconſiſtent with or contradictory unto any true and undoubted Principle of Reaſon. For God, who is the Author of all truth, as well natural as ſupernatural, cannot contradict himſelf. This, I confeſs, is a very tickliſh point, and calls for great warineſs and circumſpection; it being ſo eaſie and

ſo

ſo ordinary for Men to be ſwayed by Imagination, Intereſt, and Prejudice, to call that Reaſon which is as far from being ſo, as midnight is from being high noon. And Men may, through Ignorance, Incogitancy, or Perverſneſs, ſuppoſe a contradiction where there is none. Nevertheleſs, this we may ſafely ſay, that whatſoever is certainly, and undeniably proved to be a Principle of Reaſon, there can be nothing in Scripture that really contradicts it.

But, Fifthly, The Knot of the Controverſie lies here, whether Humane Reaſon by its own Natural Principles, or thoſe Philoſophical Axioms that are thence deduced, as its Supream Commanding Rule, muſt guide and determine us in examining and deciding what is the Senſe of thoſe parts of Scripture that are purely of Supernatural Revelation? And this is that which is here denied.

§ 3. The affirmative is maintained by ſome: and indeed it ſeems to be the great *Helena* of that ſort of Men, who

who have imbibed the new Divinity of *Socinus*, and the Foundation of all their *Heterodoxies*: upon this account it is that they ſo vehemently oppoſe the Trinity of Perſons in the Godhead, the Eternal Deity of our Lord Jeſus, the Perſonality of the Holy Ghoſt, the Doctrines of Original Sin, of the Satisfaction of Chriſt, and Juſtification by his imputed Righteouſneſs; with ſundry other material points, that are commonly called to the Bar of Humane Reaſon by theſe Doctors of the *Racovian* Faith. Not that they have any ſound Reaſon on their ſide: for their Novelties are extremely irrational, as hath been abundantly demonſtrated by thoſe judicious Authors that have dealt with them. But truſting to their own Reaſon and its Dictates in matters ſo far above Nature, this hath led them into theſe dangerous precipices.

True it is (whether in pretence to blind the Eyes of others, or out of the conviction of Truth, or out of the uſual fate of Error to contradict it ſelf) theſe Men ſometimes let fall that which

which carries with it a fair appearance of disclaiming the Judgment of Reason in Matters of Faith: as may be seen in their great Master *Socinus* *. And such passages in him and his followers may possibly give some colour to the Exercitator to charge the Reformed Divines with wronging the *Socinians*, in saying they make Mans Reason the Rule of Interpretation * (for himself seems to be ambitious of the honour of finding this out) and it may be they have no where asserted it *in Terminis*, or spoken it out so broadly as this Gentleman hath done. But notwithstanding all this flourish, when they argue against the forementioned Doctrines, received upon clear Scripture-warrant by all the Christian Churches in the World, from the beginning of Christianity; their grand objection is drawn from Reason, to which they appeal in all these Controversies as to their Oracle; and thereupon set their Wits at work to wrest and winde the Scriptures (alledged in defence of those Doctrines) every way they

* *Lib. de Author. Script. cap.* 1. *p.* 16 & *c.* 4. *p.* 66. & 71.

* *Phil Scr. Int. cap.* 16 *par.* 7. & 8.

they can imagine, to evade their plain meaning, and faſten on them a Senſe of their own making, ſuitable to their beloved Maxims. Beſides many other paſſages there are of that Party that diſcover what their Mind is in this point.

But theſe are not the firſt that ſet this preſumptuous Doctrine on foot. I find it laid to the charge of the Manichees (as irrational and abſurd as their Conceptions were) that they profeſſedly ſuſpended the Articles of Faith upon the judgment of Reaſon, and required Men to believe nothing but what they could prove by Reaſon. So much we learn from him, who was once one of them; but happily delivered out of their ſnare *.

* *Aug. Retract. cap. 14 & de utilitate credendi, cap. 1.*

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

1. *The first Argument disabling Reason and Philosophy for being the Scriptures Interpreter, from the condition of Mans depraved Reason in this lapsed State.* 2. *The Apostles Words in* 1 Cor. 2. 14. *urged, and vindicated from some Mens mistaken Glosses.* 3. *The Argument enforced from the foul mastakes of the most Rational among the Heathen in matters of Religion.*

§ 1. NOW that Reason or Philosophy cannot in the Sense given, be the Scriptures Interpreter, I prove by the following Arguments:

Arg. 1. First, Man's Reason, though furnished with the best Principles and richest Endowments, that Nature affords it in this lapsed State, is so darkned and depraved, that it not only is much disabled for apprehending the things of God, but sets it self against them

them; and therefore it is not in a capacity by its own Principles to interpret Scripture-Doctrines.

Something Natural Light diſcovers of God; but alas! how little? The Principles of Natural Knowledge are but general and confuſed, not ſufficient to guide Man in the things of greateſt concernment. It teacheth Man that there is a God; but when he comes to determine what an one He is, how lame and imperfect, how unſuitable and unbecoming are Mens natural apprehenſions of him! The Apoſtle ſays, 1 *Cor.* 1. 21. that, *in the wiſdom of God the World by wiſdom knew not God.* Where he means not the rude and ignorant multitude, but the wiſeſt and moſt accompliſhed for Natural Abilities: theſe, with the ſtudy of Philoſophy (which is the conſideration of Gods infinite Wiſdom in Creating and Governing the World) did not arrive at the right knowledge of God. The ſame Apoſtle tells us of the unconverted *Gentiles*, Eph. 4. 18. *that they had their underſtandings darkned, and were alienated from the life of*

God through the ignorance that was in them, &c. and, *Rom.* 8. 7. he ſays, *the Carnal Mind*, φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς, the wiſdom of the Fleſh, the unrenew'd Mind of Man, *is enmity againſt God; for it is not ſubject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be.*

§ 2. But I ſhall eſpecially inſiſt upon that of the ſaid Apoſtle in 1 Cor. 2. 14. *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are fooliſhneſs unto him: neither can he know them, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.* By the ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος the *Animal* or *Natural* Man the Apoſtle means him that is in his meer Naturals, having no other wiſdom or underſtanding given him than what is common to him with all Mankind. Such an one *receives not the things of the Spirit*: that is, he doth not approve of them and embrace them; he finds no reliſh in them, and therefore rejects them: *for they are fooliſhneſs unto him*; he ſcorns the myſteries of the Goſpel, as if it were nothing but a heap of *phantaſtick traſh*, a confuſed

fuſed medly of *abſurd unintelligible fancies.*

Neither can he know them, ſays the Apoſtle, *becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned:* that is, he cannot (as he is in this unrenew'd ſtate) diſcern the true beauty and excellency of them, becauſe they are not to be diſcerned, but by a Spiritual Light, and by a Spiritual Faculty, which the Natural Man is wholly deſtitute of. Or, as the learned Biſhop of *Down* expreſſeth it, *They are taught and perceived by the aids of Gods Spirit, Revelation and Divine Aſſiſtance and Grace.* *Ductor Dubitant. l. 1. c. 2.*

Great endeavors have been uſed to wreſt this Scripture. "Some think to "evade the dint of it, by alledging, that "by ψυχικος is meant one that is led by "Fleſhly Luſts; becauſe ψυχη is ſometimes "taken for the ſenſitive part of the "Soul, in oppoſition to νους, which is "the Rational. Exception 1. *Schlichtingius, Veltbuſius, & alii.*

To this I anſwer two things,

Firſt, Suppoſe this that ψυχικος ἀνθρωπος the Natural Man be taken for one ſe- Sol. 1.

duced by corrupt and inordinate affections; yet this will include all men as they are by nature, and as unregenerate; witneſs what the Apoſtle ſays, Epheſ. 2. 1,2,3. *And you hath he quickned, who were ſometimes dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, wherein in time paſt ye walked according to the courſe of the World, according to the Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that now worketh in the Children of Diſobedience: Amongſt whom alſo we all had our converſation in times paſt, in the Luſts of our Fleſh fulfilling the deſires of the Fleſh and of the Mind,* &c. It is the condition of all Mankind by our firſt Apoſtaſie from God, to be in bondage to ſinful luſts, till the Grace of *Chriſt* have ſet us free. And this none but a *Pelagian* will deny.

Secondly, It is evident by the context that ψυχικὸς is in this place oppoſed to πνευματικὸς, Spiritual: and the natural man is (as the Apoſtle *Jude* explains it in his Epiſtle, verſ. 19.) one that is deſtitute of the Spirit: and conſequently he is one that hath no higher inward Principle to guide him than his own Rea-

Reason. Ψυχικὸς (saith the Learned *Grotius*) *Non est idem quod σαρκικὸς, qui corporis affectibus gubernatur sed est is, qui humanæ tantum rationis luce ducitur.* The Natural is not the same with the Carnal, who is swayed by the affections of the Body; but it is he who is led only by the light of Humane Reason. Or (as I find the Greek Scholiast cited by a late Author) ὁ μόνην ἐμφυτὸν ζωὴν ἀνθρωπίνην ἔχων; the man that is endued with meer humane wisdom. Such an one, whatsoever his natural endowments may be, and how learned or wise soever, according to the best improvement of Natures Light, is ψυχικὸς; So our learned *Davenant*, *Philosophus quà Philosophus nihil aliud est quam animalis homo; & ipsa Ratio non illuminata fide ad hanc animalitatem pertinet.* *Expos. ep. ad Coloss. in cap. 2. 8.*

But let us hear what the Exercitator says to this place. *The Apostle*, says he, *speaks not here of a Man that by Natural Light hath attain'd the right knowledge of Truth and Goodness; for a truely* Exercitation 2. *Phil. Scr. Int. cap. 7. par. 4.*

truely wiſe Man never cenſures what he does not diſcern; whereas the Man here ſpoken of, is one that knows not the things of the Spirit, and yet accounts them fooliſhneſs; which cannot be meant of the true Philoſopher; for ſuch an one ſuſpends his judgment of things till ſuch time as he hath attained a clear and diſtinct perception of them. Therefore the Apoſtle muſt needs be underſtood either of a man utterly ignorant, or of one that follows the ſway of his blind affections. Such an one, ſays he, *receives not Spiritual Things, that is, the things that belong to the Rational Soul, which is a Spirit.*

Sol. 1. To this (paſſing by ſo much of it as is met with already in the former Exception) I anſwer ſeveral things.

Firſt, Whereas he ſays, that by the Animal or Natural Man is not meant he that hath by Natural Light attain'd the right knowledge of truth and goodneſs. I ſay ſo too; for the Apoſtle means by it, one that hath no other than natural light in ſearching after truth and goodneſs; who may therefore

therefore eaſily, yea who will certainly miſtake, having no better guide.

Secondly, Whereas he ſays, a true Philoſopher never is raſh in his cenſure of things, but always ſuſpends his judgment till he hath attained a clear perception of them, and that therefore ſuch an one cannot be thought to judge the things of the Spirit fooliſhneſs before he know them; this is all one, as if he had ſaid a true Philoſopher is a Chimæra: for (it ſeems) he is one who never determines of any thing till he clearly perceives what it is, and then what he determines is undoubtedly true: whence it will follow, that every true Philoſopher is infallible. And where was ſuch an one ever yet to be found? Certain it is, that the moſt eminent Philoſophers (not inferior in their Natural Learning to this Exercitator, or any of his Companions) did in the firſt breaking out of the Goſpel, make a mock of the whole Doctrine of Chriſtianity. Thus did the Philoſophers at *Athens*, when they heard St. *Paul*: and thus did *Porphyrie*, *Celſus*, and

others, after the Apoſtles dayes.

Thirdly, When this Author will have no more meant here by things Spiritual, but things belonging to the Rational Soul, which is a Spirit; he is groſly over-ſeen, to ſpeak no worſe. For the Apoſtles words are τὰ τοῦ πνεύματος τοῦ θεοῦ, the things of the Spirit of God: which certainly is not the Soul of Man, but the Holy Ghoſt. And when the Apoſtle *Jude* deſcribes the ψυχικοὶ ſenſual, or natural, by πνεῦμα μὴ ἔχοντες, having not the Spirit, ſurely he did not mean they had no Rational Soul; but that they were deſtitute of the Regenerating Spirit of Grace. And that of this Spirit the Apoſtle *Paul* is to be underſtood in the place under preſent conſideration, the whole tenour of his Diſcourſe, from *verſ.* 9, to 15. doth undeniably manifeſt: If at leaſt (by this Gentlemans good leave) the Scripture might be allowed to interpret it ſelf.

§. 3. The wofull ignorance and perverſneſs concerning the things of God, that diſco-

diſcovered it ſelf in the wiſeſt and beſt civilized part of the World, and ſuch as had improved their natural light to as high a pitch as any other we can read of, is an abundant evidence of what I aſſert concerning the darkneſs and pravity of Mans Reaſon. They became (as the Apoſtle ſays) vain in their imaginations, and their fooliſh heart was darkned: profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe, they became fools, *Rom.* 1. 21, 22. They acknowledged a Deity, and that God was to be worſhipped: but in the manner and way of worſhip, how wofully were they miſtaken! yea thoſe times and places that were beſt cultivated, and that flouriſhed moſt in all Humane Learning, were of all other the moſt ſottiſh in their Idolatrous Worſhips, giving religious adoration to Brute Creatures, to Dumb Pictures, to Diſeaſes and Humane Paſſions, yea to Helliſh Furies. And whereas, ſome that were more ſagacious than the reſt (as *Socrates*, *Cicero*, and ſuch like) ſaw enough to condemn that way of Religion that was then in uſe (obſerving the

the Rites in fashion, *tanquam legibus jussa, non tanquam diis grata*, as St. *Aug.* observes out of *Seneca*) yet when they came to enquire and determine of the true Religion, they were confessedly at a loss, and acknowledged that they could better cry down the *wrong* than find out the *right*.

Aug. de C. D. l. 6 c. 10.

They had what is indelibly planted in all men a desire of happiness: but they were miserably bewilder'd in their search after it. And whereas they were, some of them, sensible of a dreadfull blow that Man's Nature had received, discerning a Combat in themselves between their Reason and their Sensual Appetite; and saw the World generally over-run with wickedness, and consequently vexed with a continual succession of calamities; yet as they could never by natures light find out the source and spring of all this, and what it was that first brought sin and sorrow upon Mankind; so in vain did they weary themselves in inventing ways of reconciling themselves to God, and

and procuring his Fa vour, whom they ſaw to be diſpleaſed, and of curing the Maladies of their diſordered and diſcompoſed Natures : in both which they took ſuch ſtrange and horrid courſes, as did but increaſe the evil they lay under, and exceedingly multiply their own guilts. Now it being thus, how can the Principles of Reaſon and Philoſophy be a ſafe Rule, whereby to interpret the *Holy Scriptures*.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

1. *Several Exceptions againſt the foregoing Argument removed*, viz. *That this holds onely where the Scripture is unknown.* 2. *That it ſtrikes not at Right Reaſon and Sound Principles.* 3. *That Reaſon is of God: And that Truth is not contrary to Truth.*

§ 1. TO this Argument, all the reply that I can conceive will be made, may be reduced to a few particulars, which I ſhall briefly diſpatch.

Exception 1. "It will be ſaid, That this Argu-
"ment holds of Man's Reaſon, while
"he is deſtitute of the Written Word;
"but reacheth not them who have the
"Scriptures to enlighten them.

Sol. To paſs by other Anſwers that may be gathered from what hath been already ſaid; This Exception yields the Cauſe: For it ſuppoſeth Man's Reaſon unable to diſcover the Mind of God without Scripture Light. And if ſo, then whatſoever Revealed Truth is more

more darkly delivered in any one part of Scripture, muſt receive light from the Scripture it ſelf ſomewhere elſe, where it ſpeaks more plainly: without which Man's Reaſon (notwithſtanding the beſt Natural Principles to aſſiſt it) would leave him at a loſs: conſequently it is not the principles of Reaſon and Philoſophy that muſt be the Rule of Interpretation, but the Scripture it ſelf, as ſhall be ſhewn hereafter.

§ 2. Exception 2.

"But, ſay ſome, when we ſay Reaſon by its Principles is to Interpret Scripture, we mean it of right Reaſon, proceeding upon ſound Principles, and not of Reaſon depraved, and Principles corrupted.

Sol.

I anſwer, theſe are ſmooth Words, but what do they ſignifie? There were ſome colour for this reply, if uncorrupt Reaſon (either in the Faculty or the Principles) were infallibly to be found. The Exception ſpeaks of Reaſon *abſtractly* and in the *Idea*, ſuppoſing it freed from all thoſe depravations and entanglements that have captived

tived and debaſed it: Whereas we are ſpeaking of Reaſon as it is in Men, who are to make uſe of it. And we know what is ſaid of Man, *Gen.* 6. 5. *God ſaw that the wickedneſs of Man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was onely evil continually.* Every Man is thus depraved from his birth; ſo that we have all need of renewing in our higheſt faculties, *in the Spirit of our Mind*, *Eph.* 4. 23. And this original depravation is increaſed by a farther contracted malignity through vitious habits and deceitfulneſs of ſinfull luſts. In the *moſt* it remains wholly thus: and in the *beſt* in this life it is but in part renew'd; and therefore in danger to miſtake, and that groſly, in things Spiritual, when it goes to work onely by its own natural Principles. And whereas it may be thought or ſaid, there is no danger ſo long as Reaſon performs it works aright: I reply, how ſhall that be known? by what Rule ſhall we examine and find out when Reaſon paſſeth a right judgment? or how ſhall the

Principles

Principles that Reaſon pretends to uſe in matters of Revelation, be tryed, if not by the Scriptures? Shall the unqueſtionable Word of God be brought to the Bar of Man's Reaſon, and be tryed by its Dictates? and ſhall theſe Dictates of our lame and imperfect Reaſon in things of God and Eternity be uncontrolable, and admitted without any debate in matters of pure Revelation, as if they were the only SupremeLaw, over-ruling all ſupernatural diſcoveries of God's Will? do we not know that mens conceptions concerning the Principles of Reaſon are various? Some ſay, one thing is a ſound Principle of Reaſon, and others will plead for the contrary: beſides, there is as great a difference in the application of the ſame Principle to particular caſes. *When Reaſon alone is the warrant and the guide* (ſays the late Biſhop of *Down*) *a Man ſhall not alwiy find out what is pleaſing to God: and it will be to no purpoſe to ſay, that not every Man's Reaſon, but Right Reaſon ſhall be the Law; for every Man thinks his own Reaſon* *Duct. Dub. lib. 3. c. 3.*

Reason right; and whole Nations differ in the assignation and opinons of Right Reason: and who shall be Judge of all but God.

This is certain, that sundry Philosophers of old, who were cried up for Men of strong Reason, and many learned Men of late, who profess a high esteem of Reason, and frequently appeal to that, in their *Novel Opinions*, are chargeable with many gross absurdities in their Tenets, inconsistent with the plainest principles of natural light. Yea, are not many learned *Atheists* reckoned, by themselves and others, great Masters of Reason? What Natural Principle more clear and undoubted than this, *That two contradictions cannot be true at once.* Insomuch as it is conceived by some, that all Principles that are not thought fit to be proved in any Natural Science (if they be truely so) may easily be resolved into this one. *A thing cannot at once be and not be.* And yet even this Principle of Contradictions hath been denied by some: whereof we have a pregnant instance

stance in *Weigelius* and his Followers, and a late *Carmelite* Frier; beside what *Aristotle* says of some ancient Philosophers. Great is Mans proneness to judge according to his inclinations and interests. It's a known observation, *Such as a Man is, such he thinks God to be.* And according to the prevailing bent of his Heart, so are his Conceptions of Truth or Falshood. And it was an old complaint, *Scripturarum esse volumus quæ nostra sunt.* Be it therefore granted, that there are some common Maxims wherein all agree, being such as shine by their own light, and which the Scriptures always suppose: Yet these are so *general* and so *few*, that they will not reach far, to be sure not beyond those things that are merely natural. And as for those acquired Principles that are drawn by deduction from the former, there is so great variety of Mens apprehensions concerning them, that they cannot be allowed in this case for a sufficient or tolerable Rule of Judgment. For in these we see that those

who are for determining all by Maxims of Reaſon, are greatly at odds amongſt themſelves; and ſome in that variety muſt needs err, if not all.

Inſt. "But perhaps it will be ſaid, That "Mens Expoſitions of Scripture are "likewiſe various, and many times erro- "neous; and yet the Scripture is not re- "jected, becauſe that is always the ſame "and incorrupt; ſo though Mens ap- "prehenſions about the Principles of "Reaſon be various and miſtaking, yet "the Principles themſelves are the "ſame all the World over, and conti- "nue in all Ages uncorrupt; and there- "fore may well be admitted for a Rule.

Sol. To this I anſwer: As the Scriptures are the ſame and incorrupt (notwithſtanding Mens various and erroneous apprehenſions and Interpretations) ſo we can tell where to find them, and have recourſe to them, and conſult with them: they are a ſtanding Record open and obvious to our ſearch. But for the Principles

ciples of Reason in matters of Religion, though they lie *fundamentally* in the nature of things; yet if we lay Scripture aside, they are not to be found *formally* existing any where but in the Minds and Writings of Men, who are confessed to be various, and liable to mistake: and accordingly Natural Principles are variously conceived, and may be dangerously perverted: so that if we had not the Scriptures as a surer Test to try all by, we should be always at great uncertainty, and in apparent danger of miscarrying. For I take it to be a certain Truth, that the Bible is the most perfect comprehension of all Principles of Religion, as well Natural as Supernatural: Nor know I any of the former of these (for of the latter no question is made) but what is more evidently and distinctly to be seen in the Scripture than in any other Record whatsoever.

"But Reason, say some, is of God, "and therefore cannot deceive us. §. 3. Exception 3.

I anſwer:

Sol. 1. Our Senſes alſo are of God, and yet they may and do deceive us. 2. *Adam*'s Reaſon was of God; and yet that deceived him, even in his firſt ſtate, much more may ours now. 3. Though Man's Reaſon be of God (both as to the faculty and all its ſound Principles) yet every thing that Man's Reaſon ſuggeſteth is not of God. There is (as the Philoſophers complained) a νόθος λογισμὸς a ſpurious and adulterate kind of reaſoning. And how ſhall I know whether that which pretends to Reaſon, and to be of God, be ſo indeed, but by bringing it to the Teſt of Scripture, where God hath made known his Mind about Matters of Religion: (for of them I ſpeak) more plainly and more fully than by the cleareſt Beams of Natural Light.

Exception 4. *Phil. Scr. Int. cap. 5. par. 7. & c. 8. par. 1.* "But it is further replyed, That Truth "is not contrary to Truth: therefore no-"thing in Scripture can be contrary to "Reaſon.

Under-

Understanding it of sound Reason, this is all granted. But then let it be considered. 1. That every thing is not to be accounted contrary to Reason that Reason cannot reach. 2. The former difficulty recurrs; How or where shall we be assured that what is alledged for sound Reason, is so indeed, excepting self-evident Principles, which are, as I said but General and Few) where shall it be tried? seeing there have been, and are many *Maxims* or *Axioms* commonly received among learned Men, that will not hold. 3. What if there be no contrariety, but only an appearance thereof? It doth not therefore follow, that Scripture is to be controll'd by Reason: but if there seem any opposition, the dictates of Reason are to be reduced and reconciled to Scripture. For the Principles of Reason (such I mean as are true and sound) may carry an appearing opposition to some Scripture Assertions, because perhaps the said Principles though generally received, Sol.

do admit of some limitations and restrictions, which through the weakness and imperfection of our Reason, we are not aware of. In this case it were bold and dangerous to bend the Scripture to those Principles. That which is variable and fallible is to be over-ruled by that which is fixed and unerring, as the Holy Scripture undoubtedly is: and whatsoever is indeed contrary to the Voice of God speaking in this Sacred Volume, whatever pretence it may have of Reason or Philosophy, it is but ἀντίθεσις ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως, 1 *Tim.* 6. 20. It is an honest Speech of *Aquinas*, which I find quoted by our Judicious and Learned *Davenant*: *Omnis creata Veritas est defectibilis, nisi quatenus per veritatem increatam rectificatur; unde nec homo nec Angelus infallibiliter ducit in veritatem, nisi quatenus in iis loquentis Dei testimonium consideratur.* To which I shall subjoin the judgement of *Cartesius*, whose Authority may perhaps be of more credit with some now, than either that of a Schoolman, or of an Apostle.

Qu. disp. de fide art. 8. apud Davenant de Jud. Controver. cap. 27

Apostle. *Memoriæ nostræ pro summa regula est infigendum, ea quæ nobis à Deo revelata sunt, ut omnium certissima esse credenda. Et quamvis fortè lumen rationis quam maximè clarum, & evidens aliud quid nobis suggerere videretur, soli tamen auctoritati divinæ potius quam proprio judicio, fidem esse adhibendam.* This (says he) *must be firmly remembred as our chief Rule, That those things which are revealed to us of God, are to be believed as of all things the most certain. And although perhaps the most clear and manifest light of Reason may seem to suggest to us some other thing; we are nevertheless to give credit to Divine Authority alone, rather than to our own judgment.*

Cartes. Prima Philos. par. 1. artic. 76

CHAP. IV.

1. *A ſecond Argument from the diſproportion between Man's Reaſon, and Matters of Divine Revelation.* 2. *An Exception removed.*

§ 1. Arg. 2. MY ſecond Argument is, That there is no proportion between Mans Reaſon, and the Myſteries of Divine Revelation. Theſe are ſo ſublime, they are out of the ken of a Natural Underſtanding; they are of a far different kind from the higheſt Natural Principles. How little is it that Mans Reaſon by its own Light can diſcover of the Nature of God, and his Eternal Counſels. The Heathen, who wanted Scripture Light, did but grope as Men in the dark, *Act.* 17. 27. How greatly are we to ſeek in judging of the Wiſdom, and Goodneſs, and Power, and Juſtice of God, if we have no higher light than Natural Reaſon to direct us? Nor need this ſeem ſtrange, when we ſee how much the moſt knowing

ing Men are at a loss concerning themselves, the nature and faculties of the Soul, and the manner of its union with the Body, and how little insight they have into many of the *minuta naturæ*. Can it then be wondred that Mans Reason should be unable by its own light to have a clear view of the Divine Perfections that are infinite and incomprehensible? Whence was it that so many of the wisest Heathens were so gravell'd at the proceedings of a Divine Providence, when they saw good Men suffer, and bad Men prosper? How did *Cato*, that severe Moralist, stumble at the success that *Julius Cæsar* had against *Pompey*? But what shall we say to that great Mistery of Mans Redemption by *Christ*? The line of Mans Reason is too short to reach these βάθη τοῦ Θεοῦ 1 *Cor.* 2. 10. Therefore Evangelical Doctrine is frequently called *a great Mistery*; containing such things *as Eye hath not seen, nor Ear Heard, nor have entered into the Heart of Man to conceive*; things beyond the reach, not of Men only, but

1 Tim. 3. 16. 1 Cor. 2. 7. Rom. 16. 25. 1 Cor. 2. Eph. 3. 10. 1 Pet. 1. 12.

of

of Angels. It is true, that all Men could not but know God to be very good; they found it and felt it in the daily effects of his ſuſtaining and preſerving Providence, and his wonderful patience and forbearance towards them: and they did know alſo that God is Juſt, and a Righteous Avenger of Sin; this they might ſee in the Judgments that he brought upon the World, beſide the inward witneſs of their own accuſing Conſciences. *The wrath of God was revealed from Heaven againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of Men*, Rom. 1. 18. And they knew the τὸ δικαίωμα τ Θεῦ *the righteous judgment of God*, that they who do ſuch wickedneſſes as they were conſcious to in themſelves, were worthy of death, *Rom.* 1. 32. But now how to reconcile theſe two, the Goodneſs of God to his Creatures, and his ſevere Indignation againſt Sinners, ſo as with any ſatisfaction to hope for pardon and acceptance with him; here their Principles of Reaſon faill'd them. They ſaw themſelves in a very ill caſe, and that there

there was a necessity of somewhat to appease the provoked Anger of the Divine Majesty; but how or which way this should be, they could not tell; and therefore lost themselves in a Maze of infinite Mistakes in their attempts about it. Now it being so, it is impossible that Reason by its Natural Principles should be a competent Judge of Scripture-Revelations. It must therefore submit its own conceptions and Dictates to the Doctrine of Faith contained in the Scripture.

Here possibly it will be replied (as before to the precedent Argument) "That all this may be granted of those "that enjoyed not the Gospel and "Written Word: but where this is, "Reason may be allowed to judge "and determine by its Principles con- "cerning the things there revealed. Sect. 2. Exception.

To this I answer two things:

First, This implies a contradiction; for it is not the Words or Sentences of Scripture that reveal any Mistery to us Sol. 1.

us further than thereby the Mind of God is made known to us. Now if this cannot be found out from the Scripture it ſelf, but from Principles of Reaſon, then it is Reaſon it ſelf that firſt diſcovers the Miſtery. I grant that Reaſon (that is the faculty of Reaſon) is and muſt be the inſtrument whereby we apprehend what God ſpeaks in the Scripture. But if there be any part of Scripture ſo dark, as that its meaning cannot be gathered from the Words, neither conſidered by themſelves, nor compared with other Paſſages of Sacred Writ; I would know how comes Reaſon in Interpreting ſuch an obſcure place (ſuppoſing it to be obſcure) to find that ſuch and ſuch Words ſo placed do contain in them ſuch an Aſſertion, when the Words and Sentences themſelves cannot reſolve us? You'll ſay, our Reaſon teaches us by the light of its own common notions, that this and no other muſt be the meaning of ſuch a place. Is it not then plain, that Human Reaſon fetcheth that Truth (if it be a Truth) from

from it self, and not from the Scriptures? For the Scripture (according to this Hypothesis) gives an uncertain sound, onely Reason determines it. Remember we are speaking of matters of pure Revelation. Now if the Sentences of Scripture under debate do neither by themselves, nor with the help of any other, clearly and certainly signifie any such thing as is fasten'd upon them; such Arguers cannot say, they have it by Divine Revelation, unless they will pretend to that Enthusiastick Inspiration, which they profess to decry, and falsly charge upon their Opposites.

Secondly, I add further, that there are sundry things revealed in Scripture, whereof God gives us no other Reason than his own Will. And if our Reason will not rest satisfied with that, it will but weary it self in fruitless inquiries, and dangerously miscarry by its bold determinations. For instance, what account can our Reason give why God should provide a Saviour for lost Man, and none for the lapsed Angels? Why he should cloath his on-

only begotten Son with our dishonoured nature, and expose him to so bitter Sufferings for the Sin of Man? Why he should so severely punish the Crucifiers of his Son, when what they did was fore-determined by himself, in order to Mans Salvation? And why he should suffer so much wickedness to be done, which himself hates, and could, if he pleased, by his Almighty Power hinder? These and many more such instances might be given, wherein Mans Reason is puzzl'd, as not finding any thing wherein it can acquiesce, but the Will and pleasure of God that thus it should be. Again, God requires we should believe him upon his naked Word, though we know not which way that which he says can be; And accordingly he so manifests to us his Mind, that he will not gratifie our vanity or pride in resolving the queries, and satisfying the objections that our curiosity may start about the Truth revealed. It is enough for us to know what he hath said, and to take it upon the Authority of his Word,

word without asking *how* or *why*? And it is indeed the highest Reason imaginable, that we should give absolute credit to what he speaks *.

* *The Reason of Man* (saith the Bishop of *Down*) *is a right Judge alway when she is rightly informed: but in many things she knoweth nothing but the face of the Article: and in these cases our understanding is to submit, and not to inquire further: But if it will not consent to a Revelation, until it see a reason of the proposition, it doth not obey at all; for it will not submit till it cannot chuse.* Duct. Dubit. li. 1. cap. 2.

God's Sovereignty (saith the learned Lord *Verulam*) *reaches to the whole Man, extending itself no less to his Reason than his Will; so that it well becomes man to deny himself universally, and yield up all to him. Wherefore as we are bound to obey the Law of God, notwithstanding the reluctancy of our Will, so are we also to believe his Word, though against the reluctancy of our Reason.* *Verul. de Augm. scient. l. 9.*

I shall conclude this with the Words of the learned *Grotius*, who having asserted the Doctrines of Scripture to be no way contrary to sound Reason, (but agreeable thereunto) he he hath this remarkable passage. *Ultra hæc pro comperto aliquid affirmare, aut de Dei natura, aut de ejus voluntate, solo* *De Ver. Relig. Christ. lib. 3.*

ſolo ductu humanæ rationis, &c. How dangerous and deceitfull a thing it is to affirm any thing for certain either of the Nature or Will of God, beyond what we have in Holy Writ, by the ſole conduct of Humane Reaſon, we are taught by the many diſſentient opinions, not only of Schools, but of particular Philoſophers among themſelves. Nor is this any great wonder; for if they ran out into very differing apprehenſions when they diſputed about the nature of their own Mind, much more muſt it needs be ſo with thoſe who are deſirous to determine any thing concerning that Supreme Mind that is ſo far above us. If prudent Men count it dangerous to ſearch into the Counſels of Kings, which by all our ſearch we cannot diſcover; who is there ſo ſagacious, as can hope by his own conjectures to find out what God will do, among thoſe things that depend upon his meer pleaſure.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

A third Argument from the absurdity of resolving a Mans Faith into himself, and his own Reason.

IN the third place, If the Sense of Scripture be to be regulated and determined by Natural Principles, then the last resolution of a Mans Faith in those points (as to the formal object of it) will be into Man himself and the dictate of his own Reason. For the ultimate reason or ground of our believing in this case will not be the veracity of God, speaking in the Scripture, but the Voice of our own Reason, perswading us from its own Principles, when we can see nothing in the Words of Scripture to require it. And this plainly falls in with the absurd conceit of the Quakers: who commonly profess to own nothing that is laid down in the Bible, as the Mind of God, but what is witnessed by the light within them. Which is no more in Arg. 3.

other terms than this, That they will take nothing from the Scripture but what is agreeable to their own Reason. For the light they speak of, with which they say every Man comes into the World (for which they alledge that in *Joh.* 1. 9.) is nothing else but Mans Reason, and the common notions of it: which though some of them have heretofore denied, yet now their chief Heads and Leaders do openly avow. And this is that which they make the standing Rule of what they believe and practise, and not the Holy Scriptures. We rather say with an ancient Schoolman, *Apud Aristotelem argumentum est ratio rei dubiæ faciens fidem; sed apud Christum argumentum est fides faciens rationem.* The way of arguing in *Aristotle*'s School is by Reason begetting assent; but in *Christ*'s School it is by Faith, which is instead of all *Reason.*

Altisiod. apud I. Gerhard Loc. com. de S. Script. c. 11.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

A fourth Argument from another absurdity, viz. *That in Matters of pure Revelation the Mind of God may be better known by Natural Light than by Scripture*; *Or that all supernatural Revelation is to be shut out.*

FOurthly, It will follow from this supposal, That in matters of pure Revelation, the Mind of God may be better known by the common principles of Natural Light, than by the Holy Scriptures: which carries with it a palpable contradiction. For matters of pure Revelation are supposed to be supernatural; and if these as laid down in Scripture, cannot be understood from the Scripture it self, but must have such a Sense given them, as the Maxim of Natural Reason shall determine; then certainly it is not Revelation, but Reason that discovers them: And so what need will there be of Scripture. Indeed this conceit looks very like that absurd dotage of *Weigelius* (if it be not the same with it) that Mans knowledge of Arg. 4.

all things whatsoever must be fetcht from within himself, & not from without. *Te nôris* (says he) *& omnia nôris; omnia enim es, non minus quam Deus* *. Which (besides many other prodigious absurdities) plainly shuts out all supernatural Revelation. And that this lies at the bottom of the Exercitators Discourse, I find reason enough to suspect, if not conclude For (besides what he says in his sixth Chapter, the first Paragraph which I shall wave insisting on) in his Epilogue at the end of his Book, he propounds an Objection against his whole Discourse, *viz.* "That if Philosophy be the Rule of Interpreting "the Holy Scripture, then the Scripture "is useless and written to no purpose: "for seeing the truth of all the Senses "of Scripture, which are to be search'd "out and tryed by Philosophy, must "first be perceived before they be "drawn out and examined, to what "end is it that we should have recourse "to Scripture to learn any thing from it. This is the Objection which himself makes against his own Position. In answer

* i.e. *Know thy self and thou knowest all things; for thou art all things no less than God.*

swer whereto he runs out into a long Harangue of words, and (as his manner is) propounds a frivolous distinction, and tediously dilates upon it to amuse his Reader. But the sum of all comes to this, That the words of Scripture are of no further use than as they are signs of conceptions and things; and under that consideration they cannot be understood, unless the things signified by them be first known, at least in some gross and confused manner. Whereof he gives us this instance, that where we find in Scripture that *God is Omniscient*, we cannot understand this unless we first know what *God* is, and what *Omniscience* is. Therefore, says he, all the benefit that any can get by any Book that is written, is but this, that it stirs up the Mind of the Reader to reflect upon the clear and distinct *Idea's* of those things in his Mind which the Book treats of; not that the Book can, of it self bring him to the true knowledge of things, much less that it can beget any clear or distinct *Ideas* in his Mind which were not there before. And

thus he tells us it is with the Scripture; all the use of it is to stir up the Reader or Hearer to think of the things that it propounds, and inquire into them, and examine them whether they be so as they are there propounded; and that they may do this, they must make use of Philosophy to try what is there written. Therefore (adds he) the Scripture is to be used, not that it should of it self inform us in the truth, or render the truth more clear and distinct, or make it more firm to us; but that it may give us occasion and matter of meditating on those things which perhaps otherwise we should never have minded. Therefore (says he still) the utility and excellency of the Scriptures above other Books consists onely in this, That the things it speaks of are of so great concernment to our everlasting blessedness; not for any use they are of to instruct us in the Truth. This is all the use that he allows the Scripture: from whence I think will inevitably follow that he owns the necessity of no knowledge of God or Religi-

Religion but what is natural. And so all supernatural Revelation, or at least all necessity of it is denied. And if there be no other use of the Written Word but what this Author assigns it, its put into the same rank with a Crucifix, or a Deaths Head. Indeed the whole design of his Book, and of that other Tract that is prefixed to its latter Edition (written, as is supposed, by the same Author) is utterly to undermine and overthrow the credit of the Scriptures. We need not wonder that he so often derides and calumniates the Protestant Doctrine of the Spirits internal illumination of the Mind, which consists in curing the indisposition of the Subject, and fitting it for the right understanding of Heavenly Things: (of which more hereafter in an Appendix to my present Discourse) when he will not allow the necessity of so much as an Enternal Light for the Revelation of Supernatural Objects, as acknowledging no such things. And he that is thus principled, must needs be very ignorant of himself, and of the ruines

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that Sin hath made among the whole Race of *Adam*, and the woful depravation of Mans Nature by his first Apostasie. But for the Readers full satisfaction about the necessity of Supernatural Revelation, I dare commend to his perusal (besides many other useful Discourses that might be named) that excellent Piece of the Eminently-accomplish'd Sir *Charles Wolsly*, concerning *the Reasonableness of Scripture Belief.*

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

1. *A fifth Argument, That this would open a gap to the most pernicious Errors, in Matters of Faith.* 2. *And Practice.*

AGain fifthly, This Assertion lets § 1. Arg. 5. loose the Bridle to proud and wanton Wits to overthrow the Foundations of Christian Religion; for though there be not the least real repugnancy between the Doctrines of Christianity and the Principles of Right Reason and Sound Philosophy, which undoubtedly there is not (as I have already premised and asserted) yet there being no certain and infallible Record of these Principles, by which, as by the Rule of Judgement, particular Mens Reasonings may be tried; If Scripture Revelation must be interpreted by Mens Reasonings, I know not the any Error that hath ever crept into the *Church of Christ*, either in matter of Faith or Practice, since the first publication of the Gospel, but may be introduced

troduced anew by this Engine. The heretical Blaſphemies of *Servetus* and *Socinus*, which ſprang up of late years; and thoſe of the *Marcionites* and *Manichees* that infeſted the Church in former times; together with the loathſome impurities of the *Gnoſticks* (who eſteemed themſelves the only knowing Men, or to ſpeak in the new mode, the onely *Rational Divines*) have fair way made them by this Trim Device.

Firſt, Let us inſtance in Matters of Faith, whatſoever is ſaid in Scripture about the Creation of the World, the Conception of our Saviour in a Virgins Womb, the Perſonal Union of the two Natures, the Reſurrection of the Body at the laſt Day; theſe, with many more that might be named, let them be brought to the Bar of Reaſon, and tried by its Principles (as they are to be found in the Minds of Men) and what will it come to? We have ſeen already what uſe ſome Men have made of this way to ſubvert the weightieſt Truths of the Goſpel.

But

But here it will be excepted perhaps by ſome, "That the Fundamentals of "Chriſtian Religion being clear and "plain in Scripture, there is no fear "of this inconvenience. Exception.

To this I anſwer:

Firſt, If Divine Revelations muſt be no otherwiſe received or underſtood, than as Men ſee ground for them in their own Reaſon, the plaineſt and cleareſt Doctrines of Scripture will be rejected. I ſhall here give two Inſtances, as I find them quoted by a late learned Author. The one is of *Socinus*, who ſays, *That he would not believe Chriſt to have ſatisfied for our Sins, though he ſhould read it once and again in Scripture; the infallibility of the Revealer not being ſufficient to eſtabliſh it, unleſs he had declared it by its cauſes and effects, and ſo ſatisfied Mens Reaſon concerning the poſſibility of it.* *Smalcius* is the other, who ſays, *That he would not believe the Incarnation of the Son of God, though he ſhould meet with* Sol. 1. *Lib. de Chriſto Servatore.* *Hom. 8. on John 1.*

with it in expreſs terms in the Bible. The ſame Author ſays elſewhere, that *by Reaſon alone we determine the poſſibility and impoſſibility of the Articles of Faith.* To which I might add the bold aſſertion of a late *Engliſh* Remonſtrant in a Volume publiſh'd ſome years ago, where he ſays, *I verily believe that in caſe any ſuch unchangeableneſs of Gods love* (*viz.* as ſhould aſſure the Saints infallible perſeverance) *were to be found in, or could regularly be deduced from the Scriptures, it were a juſt ground to any conſidering Man to queſtion their Authority, or whether they were from God or no.* And a late Belgick Tractator, having affirmed that the miraculous Works ſpoken of in Scripture were not any thing againſt or beſides the eſtabliſhed order of nature, abſolutely concludes that *whatſoever the Scripture affirms to have been done, did all neceſſarily come to paſs according to the Laws of Nature: and if any thing contrary to this could be found in Scripture, or truly gathered from any thing in it; that was certainly added to the Scripture by ſome ſacrilegious*

In præfatione cont. Frantzium.

Redemption Redeemed cap. 13. ſect. 33.

Tract. Theologico-pol. c. 6.

sacrilegious hand, as being against Nature, and therefore against Reason.

Secondly, Men that resolve to make their Reason the Rule of Interpretation will not stick to charge the Scripture with obscurity in its plainest Propositions, if they suit not with their preconceived notions. The experience of the present age puts it past all denial or dispute, that when Men have espoused an *Hypothesis* which they are not willing to relinquish, they will quarrel with the most evident Scripture, accusing it of obscurity; and to make their charge good, they will endeavour by their strain'd glosses, to raise a dust, and darken the Sense of it, though it shine never so clearly by its own light to every impartial and unprejudiced Reader. Hence it is that the Papists do so frequently with open mouth charge the Apostle *Paul* with obscurity in his Writings; because indeed he speaks more clearly and plainly than they would have him, for that great Doctrine of Justification by the imputed Righteousness of *Christ*, and against

againſt Juſtification by our own Works. And it may be, ſome will be as ready to find fault with the ſame Apoſtle, when he ſays, *Epheſ.* 5. 18. *Be not drunk with Wine, wherein is exceſs; but be filled with the Spirit:* as ſpeaking too darkly; becauſe indeed they think he ſpeaks too broadly againſt the debauchery that they practice; and ſo plainly for the Spirit, which they ſcorn and deride.

3. Thirdly, Nay more, ſome are grown to that heighth (as I ſhall have occaſion to ſhew more fully in my ſecond Part) as to aſſert that the Scripture is plain in nothing, but univerſally obſcure; and make this their great ground for their ſetting up Reaſon and Philoſophy as the Rule to determine the Senſe of the Bible. And let this be granted them, they will ſoon make the Scripture ſpeak whatſoever themſelves pleaſe: and ſo the Bible ſhall be but as a dead Image, and Mans depraved Reaſon like the *Dæmon* within ſhall give the Oracle.

2. Come

§ 2. 2. Come we next to matters of Practice. It is easie to instance in several commands of God in Scripture, that are directly opposite to the whole corrupt interest of lapsed nature: As, when he requires the mortifying of our earthly desires, the love of our deadliest Enemies, the denying our of selves in whatsoever is dear to us in this World, even to the laying down of our lives for the defence of his Truth, upon the bare hope of an invisible happiness in another World. Now considering how Mans Reason is darkned and enslav'd, and no where perfectly cured, if Mens Reason must by its own Principles interpret the Sense of Scripture, how numerous are the objections that will be made against these and all other Precepts that are not to the *Gust* of Mans degenerate nature? Thus did the *Gnosticks* of old plead for denying the Faith in persecuting times to save their life: for *what!* (said they) *Doth God delight in the death of Men? he stands in no need of our Blood: Christ came to save Mens lives,*

lives, and not to expoſe them to hazard. And with theſe reaſonings they ſhifted off the command of owning the Truth in the face of danger. And what the Author of the *Leviathan* hath written of this, with a ſpecious, though falacious pretence of Reaſon, is not unknown.

But I ſhall inſtance in two extraordinary commands given to particular perſons. The one is that which God did by immediate Revelation give to
Gen. 22. *Abraham*, requiring him to offer up his onely Son *Iſaac* for a Burnt-offering. What would the Principles of Natural Reaſon have ſaid to this, might they have been admitted to interpret this Command. "What? Can infinite good-
"neſs require ſuch an unnatural act as
"this, for a Father to lay violent
"hands on his own Child? Hath not
"God ſtrictly forbidden Murder?
"Hath he not always manifeſted his
"tender regard to the life of Man?
"And hath he not planted that ten-
"der affection in the Heart of a Parent,
"that makes him abhor to embrue his hands

"hands in Childs Bloud? Therefore "surely (would Mans Reason say) the "meaning of this injunction is something "else, far different from what the words "seem to sound: there is some more "mysterious sense to be found out, and "a milder interpretation to be made "of this Divine Oracle, such as may "consist with those Notions of God "which we are taught by that Inter-"nal Light that shines in the Hearts "of all Men. It is most rational there-"fore to interpret it by an Allegory; "*Isaac* must be sacrificed *in Effigie*, or "a Lamb out of the Flock must have "*Isaac*'s name put upon it, and so offer'd "up to God: or (according to the "notation of his name) we must sacri-"fice that joy and delight that we have "had in our Son *Isaac*, wherein per-"haps we have exceeded, by mortify-"ing our affections to him, and have "him hereafter as if we had him not. The other instance shall be in the com-mand given by our Saviour to the Rich young Man, to sell all, and give to the Poor, and follow Him in hopes of a

Treaſure in Heaven. We may probably ſuppoſe, by the Mans turning his back, what objections his Reaſon made againſt it. "Are not my Poſſeſſions "the good Gifts of God? and ſhall I "unthankfully caſt away what he hath "given me? I am to love my Neighbor "as my ſelf; therefore ſurely not to "ſtrip my ſelf of my ſubſiſtence to "help my Neighbor, and ſo loſe the "uſe and benefit of what I have. True, here is a plain Command. But could not this mans Reaſon have excogitated ſome hidden Senſe to ſatisfie the Command, and yet ſave his Goods? Yes ſure, had the Man learnt but this new Art of Interpreting that ſome have got now adays, he might have thought within himſelf, "That ſelling all was the "diſengaging of his affections from "them; and giving to the poor, his re-"lieving them in a convenient propor-"tion, ſo as ſtill to preſerve his Eſtate; "and follow *Chriſt* he might in a good "and holy life, though he did not al-"ways perſonally attend him. But now would not this way of Interpre-

tation

tation in either of the forenamed instances, have been a plain eluding of an express command? And yet I am sure the bold attempts of some in our Age, who are great Pretenders to Reason, have, in sundry considerable and clear Points of Religion, gone as far as this comes to, and much further, in torturing the Scriptures into a Sense as contrary to that which they fairly give us of themselves, as darkness is to light. And indeed by the help of this Engine, what will not be adventured by audacious Wits, that have cast off the awe of God, and of his holy Word; Men whose glory it is *αἰσχύνην κτᾶσθαι*? Let but others follow the Tract that some have already trodden out to them, and they will make the whole Bible one great Cipher, utterly insignificant of his Mind and Will by whose Authority it was endited; and that which *Erasmus* feared in his time, *Ne sub obtentu priscæ literaturæ caput erigere tentet Paganismus*, may be unhappily fulfilled in our days.

CHAP. VIII.

The sixth and last Argument, from one great end of Scripture-Revelation, to supply the Defects, and correct the Mistakes of our Reason. An Exception of the Exercitator answered.

Arg. 6. LAstly, One great end of Scripture-Revelation, is to help our Understandings in matters of Religion, partly by rectifying our mistaken and depraved Reason, and keeping us from being misled in the Things of God by the Principles we have received; partly by supplying the defects of Reason, acquainting it with those things, which by its own Natural Light it could never reach; being by their sublimity and mysteriousness wholly above it. Therefore the Doctrine of Scripture doth in its tendency λογισμὸς καθαιρεῖ, cast down reasonings, and αἰχμαλωτίζει πᾶν νόημα captivate every Notion or Conception to the obedience of *Christ*, 2 *Cor.* 10. 5. For any therefore in matter of doubt or

or difficulty about the Sense of Scripture-Revelation, to run to the Principles of Reason, is to measure the Rule by that which should be measured by it: And what a base dishonour is this to the Sacred Oracles, to subject them to the usurp'd Dictatorship of that which is to be regulated by them, and to submit themselves to its final Judgement.

But here the Exercitator replies, "That in the present case the Divine "Oracles are not submitted to the "Judgement of Reason or Philosophy; "but onely the Letters and Syllables, "the Words and Sentences of Scri-"ture; which are nothing but *loqua-"ces soni, aut horum mutæ notæ*, some "wordy sounds, or the dumb signs of "them, framed for the purpose by *Hu-"mane Institution*, which therefore may "without any disparagement be sub-"jected to the Judgement of Reason "and Philosophy, which are the emi-"nent Gifts of God. And for the bet-ter managing of this Plea, he makes great use of a Distinction which he Exceptiones. *Ph. Scr. Int. cap. 16. par. 9.*

elſewhere inculcates, to wit, the conſideration of the Scriptures Materially or Formally.

To this I anſwer:

Sol. 1. 1, Surely had the Ancient Church been of this Gentlemans Mind, they would never have ſo ſeverely cenſured the *Traditores*, that delivered up their Bibles to the Perſecuters, to ſave their own lives in the days of *Dioclesian*: and it might have been pleaded in their behalf, that they did not give up the Divine Oracles, but only a heap of Dumb Signs or Characters in Ink and Paper.

2. 2. And the ſame would have juſtified the rage of *Antiochus* in tearing and burning the Books of the Law; and the madneſs of the Papiſts in doing the like at ſeveral times by the Proteſtants Bibles: all which might, by the help of this ſhuffle, have pleaded for themſelves, that they did not burn the Holy Scriptures, (no by no means) but only a bundle of unſens'd Characters.

1. Macc. 1, 56.

3. 3. As for the Exercitators diſtiction (which

(which is the foundation of this conceit) I intend to deal with it hereafter, when I come to speak of Scripture being its own Interpreter. Therefore at present I shall let it pass. *v. 2. par. ch. 12*

G 4 CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

The contrary Arguments Examined, and Answered; the first from some Positions of the Exercitator about the manifold Sense of Scripture, &c.

I Come now to examine what was alledged by the Adverse Part, and to answer the Arguments whereby they would prove Reason and Philosophy to be the Scriptures best Interpreter.

Arg. 1. *Ph. Scr. Int. c. 6. par. 1.*

1. The Exercitator argues from some Positions by him formerly laid down which he supposes himself to have demonstratively proved in his 4th Chapter, *viz.* That the next and immediate "Sense of the Scripture is manifold, and "whatsoever Truths occur to the Readers Mind in the perusal of any Scripture, they are all to be taken for "the true intended sense and meaning "of that Scripture: and Philosophy "being the true, certain, and undoubted knowledge of the nature of things "demonstratively deduced from the "Prin-

"Principles of Natural Light; there-
"fore by this the several Truths that
"lie in the Scripture, may be best drawn
"out and demonstrated, and all false
"Interpretations discovered, and con-
"sequently this is the infallible Rule of
"Interpretation. This is the Sum of
his Argument. For answer, Here are Sol.
many things crowded together in this
captious *Sorites*, which must be particularly discussed, that the vanity and folly of the whole may the better appear.

1. He supposes the immediate Sense 1.
of Scripture to be manifold, and that one and the same Sentence of Scripture affords great variety of different Senses. This I deny: and do maintain with the consentient Judgment of the Reformed Churches, that the Sense of Scripture is but one. Thus much I grant:

1. That there may be various applications or accommodations made of one and the same Literal Sense of Scripture, so it be done with due caution; and no otherwise can that threefold

sense

Sense which some speak of, *Allegorical*, *Anagogical*, *Tropological*, be allowed.

2. That one single Sentence of Scripture may and frequently doth contain many very weighty Truths in it; but these are not *Co-ordinate* Senses of the same Proposition; this is but one; the rest are but either some *Specials* included in their *General*, or some deductions from Scripture Assertions, as of Conclusions from their Principles wherein they are virtually comprehended.

3. I further grant, That sundry passages of Scripture (especially in the Old Testament) have a mystical Sense besides the Literal; to wit, when one thing is propounded as a Type representing somewhat else. But then the thing signified by the words of Scripture is but one, namely, that onely which the Literal Sense exhibits, which propounds the Type. The Antitype is not signified by the words in those Scriptures, but by the Type, which those words do immediately speak of. For example, when we find in *Numb.* 21. 8, 9. how by God's command *Moses*

ſes ſet up a Brazen Serpent upon a Pole for the Bitten *Iſraelite* to look on that he might be heal'd; theſe words that relate the Hiſtory, ſignifie no more than what they literally import. But the Brazen Serpent there ſpoken of did indeed ſignifie ſomewhat elſe; for it did tipically repreſent the future Crucifixion of *Chriſt* for the Salvation of Sinners, as our Saviour himſelf hath taught us, *Joh.* 3. 14.

Indeed this conceit of the multiplicity of Senſes ſerves our Exercitators turn very well, becauſe it helps to render the Scripture *ambiguous* and thereby obſcure; and that is the principal ſtrength of his Cauſe; of which I ſhall ſpeak hereafter in due place. Mean while let us ſee what he hath to ſay for this fancy.

Two kinds of proof he uſes, the one from Reaſon, the other from the Teſtimony of learned Men. His Reaſons are drawn from Gods Omniſcience and Veracity. God perfectly knows all the ſeveral ſignifications of the words that he hath uttered in Scripture, and whatſoever *Ph. Scr. Int. cap. 4. par. 4.*

ver the Reader can apprehend in them: and he is also most true and faithful, and therefore would not deceive or delude any by his Words. Hence he gathers, that whatsoever sense may be made of any part of Scripture, if it be in it self a Truth, it must be own'd for the true meaning of the Spirit of God in that place.

To this I answer:

Were all this intended only of the multiplicity of *subordinate* Senses, depending on and deducible from that *immediate* Sense, which is but one, the Argument will hold firm. For if any thing do truely lie in any Mans words, or by due consequence be deducible from them, which himself did not mean when he spake them, he must needs be charged to be either ignorant or fallacious. But being intended (as it is by the Author) of a multiplicity of *collateral* and *immediate* Senses, his Argument is a miserable inconsequence.

Next he attempts to prove this by the Testimony of Learned Men; and begins with the *Jewish* Rabbins, whose child-

childish and absurd conceits need no confutation: witness that instanced by this Author, their proving the multiplicity of Senses out of *Psalm* 62. 12. (the 11. in our *English* Translation) *God hath spoken once, twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God.* That is, say they, God hath propounded one single Speech, but such as I can understand two ways, that is, many ways (a certain number being put for an uncertain) by drawing several Senses from it: wherein the Power of God consists, that he can so order and dispose his Speech, as thereby to teach men a multitude of Truths. And is not this a goodly gloss upon the Text, and an irrefragable proof of the matter in hand? Whereas the *Psalmists twice* hearing what God had *once* spoken, is no more but his diligent and attentive minding of that great and weighty Truth, That Power belongs unto God.

What he further cites out of the Fathers concerning the fecundity of Scripture, containing much in a few words, is all granted, being understood (as before)

fore) of *ſubordinate*, not *coordinate* Senſes. For that the Scripture ſhould be as a formleſs Maſs, capable of being turned by Philoſophy into a thouſand ſhapes (which this Authors conceit tends to) never was, for ought I can find, any part of their meaning.

2. 2. Whereas he ſays Philoſophy is a true, certain, undoubted knowledge of the nature of things demonſtrated by Natural Light; I ask, doth Philoſophy comprehend the knowledge of all things? Or, is the nature of all things diſcernable by Natural Light? There are in Scripture many things *Hiſtorical*, *Prophetical*, and *Dogmatical*, the knowledge whereof depends wholly upon Supernatural Revelation: What can Philoſophy do here? And even in thoſe things that are Natural, and belong to the cogniſance of Philoſophy, how ſhort is that knowledge that the moſt learned have attained? Therefore, whereas this Author ſo proudly derides our Reformed Divines for complaining of the darkneſs of Mans Natural Reaſon; if he were not too wiſe to be taught

Ph. Scr. Int. cap. 5. par. 4.

taught, he might have learnt more modesty from the ancient Philosophers, the best and wisest whereof did greatly bewail the darkness of Mans Understanding. Even *Aristotle* (who never, I think, was judged to have disparaged Humane Reason) acknowledges that our Understandings, even as to the most manifest things in nature, are but as the Eyes of the Owl and Bat to the day-light. And though both he and others of them, being unacquainted with Scripture, could not clearly discover the true original of this darkness, yet some weak conjectures some of them have made of it, and (whether by any Tradition received from the *Jews*, or by some other means I shall not enquire) some general and confused intimation they had, that Man had lost his Primitive Excellency, that the Wings of his Soul (for so they express it) had by some sad fall been so broken, that he could not arrive at any considerable measures of knowledge by his greatest industry. And hence arose that fond mistake among some of

them, that the Souls of Men having had a pre-existence before their union with their Bodies, and having offended in that State, were for a punishment of their Error, thrust into these gross terrestial receptacles and that this caused the imperfection and obscurity of Mens Understandings. But to those who own the Scripture, and may learn from thence what Mans Primitive State was, and how he fell, and are any whit acquainted with themselves, methinks it should be no strange Riddle, that the Mind is clouded and benighted even in things *Natural*, and therefore in *Supernatural* much more. But where is that Philosophy that this Exercitator cryes up for so certain and infallible? and which another Author of like Principles does with profane boldness, magnifie as equal to the Holy Scriptures for its compleat perfection and infallible certainty? Where is it? In the Clouds? Sure it never was extant among men, save in the crazy conceits of some haughty self-admirers.

Lambert. Velthus. de usu rationis in Theologia.

3. As

3. As to what our Author speaks of Philosophy being usefull to detect false Interpretations of Scripture; I grant, that where such false Interpretations are given, as do really entrench upon the undoubted Principles of Reason, the weakness and folly of them may well be discover'd by Philosophy: But all corrupt or perverse expositions are not to be so limited; nor is this enough to render Philosophy a sufficient Rule of Interpretation. The heathen Philosophers could discover the error of their vulgar Religion, but could not direct men to the true and right, as I have shewn before. The like may be said in the present case. 3.

4. Whereas our Exercitator further adds in the close of this Argument, that from the beginning of Christianity, those who were the most profound Philosophers, were generally confessed to be the happiest Interpreters of Scripture, I am far from being of his mind, none having more corrupted and depraved the Scriptures, than Men of greatest eminency for Philosophick 4.

Learning: which I do not at all impute to Philoſophy (truly ſo call'd) but to the raſhneſs and folly of Men, who being deſirous to advance that wherein they would be thought to excell, have adventured to make uſe of their Philoſophick Principles in matters of a quite different and more ſublime nature. But ſuppoſe we the utmoſt that can be ſuppoſed; That an eminent Philoſopher were furniſhed with all the moſt neceſſary accompliſhments for the underſtanding of Scripture, and ſhould duely improve them for that end; yet this would no more prove Philoſophy to be the Supream rule of Interpretation, than Grammar or Rhetorick; which are every whit as neceſſary and uſeful to ſuch a Work, if not more. No further doth any thing help us in underſtanding the Scripture, than it directs us to thoſe κειτήρια or evidences of the true ſence that lie within the Scripture it ſelf; that is, by helping us to uſe the Scripture as the Rule of its own Interpretation,

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

A second Argument, from God's being the Author of Philosophy, answered.

"EVery one, saith the Exercitator, "is the best Interpreter of his own "Words, and God being the Author "of Philosophy, to him is to be as- "cribed whatever Interpretation is "made of the Scripture by the Maxims "of Philosophy, and consequently that "is to be owned as the Rule of Inter- "pretation. Arg. 2. *Ph. Scr. Int. cap. 6. par. 1.*

But this is a strange way of Argumentation in a Man that pretends to Reason. If he have no better skill in Expounding than he hath in Arguing, he will not gain many Proselites to his Interpretations of Scripture amongst understanding and considerate Men. For, Sol.

1. This Argument may with full as much or more strength, be retorted upon him, and that two ways;

First, If because God is the Author of Philosophy, therefore Philosophy must unfold all the difficulties in Scripture: Will it not as well follow, that seeing God is the unquestionable Author of the Scriptures, therefore the Scriptures are to resolve all the difficulties in Philosophy? If it be said, that the Scriptures are not designed for any such end, nor fitted for such an use as to untie the knots of Philosophy; their use and design is of greater and higher concernment. I answer, neither is Philosophy designed to clear doubts in matters of Supernatural Revelation, its use being limited to matters of an inferior Orb. Again, we may thus also retort the Argument; If God be the best Interpreter of his own Mind, then doubtless the best Interpretation of his Mind is to be fetcht from that which is the onely certain and undoubted Record of his Mind, and that is the Scripture.

2. Secondly, That God is the Author of all true and sound Philosophy, I grant; nor needed the Exercitator to have

have given himself the trouble of spending so many lines to prove it. But I must mind him of some few things to rectifie his mistakes. *Ph. Scr. Int. c. 5. par. 3.*

1. He is widely out in supposing that the Wisdom spoken of in the Scriptures by him alledged, is no other than Philosophy. The Holy Ghost in most, if not all, of those places, speaks of something higher and more excellent than meer Natural Knowledge.

2. Whereas among other Humane Testimonies that the Author heaps up to prove Philosophy to be of God, he brings in *Lucretius*, *lib.* 5. *de rerum natura*; the learned *Vogelsangius* hath discovered his shameful mistake, telling him, that the God whom *Lucretius* there means, when he says, *Indignat. Justa p.* 67.

——Deus ille fuit, Deus, inclyte Memmi,
Qui Princeps vitæ rationem invenit eam, quæ
Nunc appellatur Sapientia, &c.

is no other than *Epicurus*; and must *Epicurus*'s Philosophy be the Scriptures Interpreter?

3. This I must add by way of limitation to my former concession, that

God is not ſo the Author of Philoſophy, as he is of the Scripture. He is ſo far the Author of the Scripture, as that he hath infallibly directed his Servants in penning its ſeveral Parts, and preſerved them from Error in that Work: But he is not ſo the Author of Philoſophy, as infallibly to direct any Man in the World ſo as not to Err in his Philoſophy. Here therefore is a very great difference: and ſeeing that this Philoſophy (which we acknowledge, ſo far as it is found and true, to be God's Gift) is no where to be found but in the Minds or Writings of fallible Men, by what certain Rule ſhall we judge of the Maxims of Philoſophy in matters of Religion, whether they be undoubtedly true or no? Or which way ſhall we be aſſured that the aforeſaid Maxims (ſuppoſing them to be unqueſtionably true) are duely applied to the matter in controverſie? Whither ſhall we go in this caſe to find out ſuch ſolid ſatisfaction as may give ſufficient ground for that Divine Faith, that we certainly owe

to

to the Doctrine of Scripture?

Thirdly, Suppoſe (what is not) that we had a clear and perfect Model or Syſtem of Sound Philoſophy to have recourſe to, ſo as we may truly ſay of it, that it is all and every Part and Particle of it of Divine Original, and ſo complete, that there is no defect in it; yet ſtill we muſt remember that Philoſophy hath its Bounds, and diſcovers nothing to us but thoſe neceſſary Truths which fall within the compaſs of nature; and ſo far we might take it for the Voice of God: But as for Supernatural Verities, the *being* and *diſcovery* whereof depend upon Gods abſolute Will and Arbitrary Revelation He never intended that Philoſophy ſhould be our guide in theſe: But here we are to keep ſolely and wholly to what he hath ſaid in the Scriptures.

CHAP. XI.

A third Argument, from the ſuppoſed Sufficiency of Philoſophy to Interpret Scripture, anſwered.

Arg. 3. *Ph. Scr. Int. cap. 4. par. 10. & c. 6. par. 1.*

"WHatſoever, ſaith the aforeſaid "Author, is neceſſary to the "Rule of Interpretation, perfectly a-"grees to Philoſophy and the Principles "of Reaſon. For they are undoubt-"edly true, free from all danger of Er-"ror, and therefore cannot deceive, "being grounded upon unmoveable "Foundations; admitting no appeals, "impartial, not inclined to this or that "ſide; in a word, ſo ſure and undoubt-"ed, that they will force aſſent; pro-"vided they be not bended or ſwayed "by Mens prejudices, or vicious incli-"nations.

Sol. 1. But, as I ſaid before, where is this Philoſophy to be found? If it be any where, how comes it to paſs, that thoſe who have in all Ages been moſt devoted to the ſtudy of it, and moſt perſpica-

cious

cious and ſucceſsfull in ſearching the ſecrets of it, have yet in many things, eſpecially that concerning Religion, ſo foully erred, and have been at ſo great odds, not onely one with another, but each with himſelf? Certain it is, that the Principles of Reaſon and Philoſophy, let them be never ſo Sound and Stable, yet they can prevail upon none any further than they are received into the Mind: and they are no where received but according to the diſpoſition and capacity of the Subject; the darkneſs and imperfection of whoſe Underſtanding much alters the conception of the ſoundeſt Principles.

Beſides, my third Anſwer to the precedent Argument will ſerve here; for let Philoſophy be never ſo infallible, it muſt be kept within its own proper ſphere, and not be applied to matters Supernatural, that are wholly out of its road, and above its reach. Of all Parts of Philoſophy, the Mathematicks are generally eſteemed the moſt demonſtrative, and irrefragable. But if any ſhould attempt by Mathematical Prin- 2.

ciples

ciples to Interpret what the Scripture hath reveal'd about the Creation of the World, the Incarnation of Christ, the Resurrection of the Body, the Believers Union with Christ, or the like, he might well be deem'd to stand in need of a large Dose of Hellebore.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

A fourth Argument, from the nature of a clear distinct Perception, answered.

"BUt (says the Exercitator) there is no clear and distinct perception of a thing, but it begets an intimate persuasion in the Conscience of the Truth of what is so perceived; which Perception and Persuasion coming from God as the Cause, it may not unfitly be call'd the Persuasion, Dictate, Testimony, Inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God: which Divines commonly, but mistakingly ascribe to that which they call Supernatural Light, out of their low esteem of Reason, and that Natural Light that is in every Man. Arg. 4. *Ph. Scr. Int. cap. 5. par. 5, 6.*

Sol. This, I confess, the Author doth not make use of among the Arguments that he produceth to defend his Cause: yet because it tends to beget a conceit (according to the drift of his Discourse) that

that what Men apprehend themſelves to have a clear knowledge of by Reaſon or Philoſophy, is infallibly certain, and thereby qualified for the ſure Interpreting of Scripture, I thought fit not to paſs it over without ſome Animadverſion.

This Aſſertion is a piece of wild ſomewhat (for whether I ſhould call it Philoſophy, or Divinity, Senſe, or Nonſenſe, I know not) that if entertain'd, gives ground to Men of corrupt Minds to father their moſt enormous Conceits upon God and his Holy Spirit. Againſt it I ſhall propound a few Conſiderations.

1. Do not all Ages of the Church bear witneſs that erring Perſons may be as confidently perſuaded of their miſtaken opinions as others are of the Truth, ſtrongly conceiving what they hold to be moſt clear and evident, ſo far as chearfully to lay down their lives in the defence of it? So capable are Men of being deluded by their own darkned and corrupted Reaſon, when they give themſelves up to it as their ſole

sole guide, that some have denied to the death those Truths, that are in some degree knowable by Natural Light, as that grand Maxim, which is the Foundation of all Religion, *That there is a God*; witness *Cæsar Vaninus*. But for Doctrines of meer Revelation, how peremptorily they are denied, and upon what ground we need no farther instance than that of the *Socinians*, or (as they are otherwise called from a more Ancient Ring-leader) *Photinians*; *who of all Hereticks have most perverted the Articles of our Creed, and found out Followers in these latter ages, who have erected a new Body of Divinity in opposition to the Catholick Theology*, says the Reverend Bishop of *Chester*. Yet this new *Socinian* Body of Heterodoxies, (called by the Clergy of *England* in their Convocation, *Anno* 1640. *a Complication of Heresies*,) is by its Fautors maintained with highest confidence, and that under the plausible pretence of clear Perception by the Principles of Reason. Upon this account One of that way denies Gods fore-knowledge

Dr. *Pearson* in his Epistle to the Reader prefixed to his Exposition of the Creed

Crellius lib. de Deo & attributis c. 24. Ostorodius Instit. cap. 6.

ledge of future contingencies; and upon the same ground another of them denies the Doctrine of the Trinity, and the two Natures of *Christ*; because their Reason tells them as clearly and evidently as the Sun shines at Noon, that these things are false.

2. 2. This countenances the absurd opinion of some ancient Philosophers, *That man is the measure of all things*: for according to this, every thing must be accounted true, that a Man is strongly perswaded to be so: whereas the truth of our Perceptions lies in their consonancy to the nature of things, which must be first supposed before we can apprehend them. And therefore that great Maxim that bears such sway with some, *that whatsoever I have a clear and distinct Perception of, is infallibly true*, is so far from being a sure Test of Truth and Falshood, that in this dark and degenerate State of Mankind, it infallibly betrays those who trust to it, to innumerable and pernicious mistakes. For suppose the Principle it self should be true, *That every thing*

is

is as we perceive, provided our Perception of it be distinct and clear: which way shall we be resolved whether this Perception we have of things be clear and distinct, or dark and confused? seeing experience puts us out of all doubt, that persons as far distant in their apprehensions of the same thing as East and West, do yet both of them with much confidence plead the greatest clearness and distinctness imaginable. What shall we think (to pass by other instances) of the contest between *Micajah* and the four hundred false Prophets about *Ahab's* Expedition? The false Prophets expressed as high a confidence of their being in the Right, when abused by a lying Spirit, as *Micajah*, who was truely guided and acted by the Holy Spirit of God. But the Explication that a late Author gives of this so much applauded Rule, viz. (*That then doth Reason clearly and distinctly perceive a thing, when it perceives it as it is in it self*) renders it plainly ridiculous, supposing the thing in question. For when I am inquiring how I shall be assured that my

1 *King.* 22

Lud. Wolzog. Cens. Cens. p. 68.

my apprehenſion of a thing is certainly true; the meaning is, how ſhall I be ſure that I underſtand the thing to be as it really is (for the verity of my Conception conſiſts in its agreement with the object.) Therefore to make a clear and diſtinct Perception, the κριτήριον of a true and right apprehenſion, and to explain this clear and diſtinct Perception by ſaying it is a Perception of a thing as it is, is to make the ſame thing the *Index* of it ſelf, and leaves me as much to ſeek as at firſt; for ſtill it will be asked, how ſhall I know that I perceive a thing as it is, or that my apprehenſion agrees with the nature of the thing?

3. I might further add, That we are obliged to believe many things, whereof we cannot have a clear and diſtinct perception, as the Trinity of Perſons in the Godhead, the Incarnation of our Saviour, the Hypoſtatical Union of the Divine and Humane Nature, and ſuch like. Touching which I grant, we muſt have a clear perception that they are revealed ere we can believe them; but

but a clear perception of the reveal'd objects themselves we cannot have, they being to us incomprehensible Mysteries: upon which ground both these and sundry other Scripture-Doctrines are by some rejected as unintelligible and irrational. But here *Des Cartes* acquits himself: For he somewhere gives his Readers this Caution, *That we should remember God the Maker of all things to be infinite, and our selves finite; and therefore if he reveal any thing to us of himself, or other things, that is above the strength of our Natural Wit (such as the Mysteries of the Incarnation and the Trinity) we must not deny them credit, though we cannot clearly understand them. Nor should we at all wonder that there are many things both in his immense nature, and in the Creatures made by him that exceed our capacity.* *Princ. Philos. par 1. art. 24.*

4. This fond conceit of the Exercitator borders upon that of the *Enthusiasts*; whose high-flown pretences of the guidance of the Spirit, and the *internal, living, essential, substantial word within them*, comes to no more, when 4

ſearcht to the quick, but their own darkned and beſotted Reaſon, whoſe abſurd Fancies and Blaſphemous Dictates they daringly imputed to the Spirit of God. This Clauſe in our Author brings him under a ſuſpition of complying with thoſe old *Libertines*, and preſent *Quakers* (whom he profeſſeth to diſlike) onely with this difference: They put their crude Conceptions into a more *phantaſtick dreſs* of great ſwelling words to amuſe the *ignorant Vulgar*; and this Gentleman hath put his opinion into a more *Manly Garb*, to render it the more plauſible to the *Literate World*.

CHAP

CHAP. XIII.

A fifth Argument, from the supposed Practice of the Ancient Fathers, Schoolmen, and others, answered.

"ANother Plea the Exercitator Arg. 5. Ph. Scr. Int. cap. 6. par. 2.
"useth, is drawn from the Practice of the Ancients, *Justin Martyr*, "*Dionysius Areopagita*, *Origen*, and o-"thers, making use of the *Platonick* or "*Eclectick* Philosophy, to Expound "the difficult places of Holy Writ, and "of the Schoolmen and others in these "latter Ages, making the like use of "the *Peripatetick* Philosophy, which "bore the sway in their times.

To this I answer,

1. Methinks this is a very lose and inconsequent way of arguing: For though this Author professeth elsewhere* that in the present controversie he intends not by Philosophy, the opinion of *Plato* or *Aristotle*, or any other whatever; yet it is plain by his Prologue, and by Sol. 1. * cap. 5. par. 2.

several passages in the Body of his Discourse, that he intends the honour of *being the Scriptures Interpreter* to the *Cartesian Philosophy*. And in this very Chapter, wherein he alledgeth the forementioned examples of Fathers and Schoolmen, he tells us that other Christians, who had forsaken the *Romish* Church, did, in their Expositions of Scripture mostly (though not exactly) tread in the steps of the Schoolmen (who made *Aristotle's* Philosophy their Rule) till that in this last Age the light of the *Cartesian Philosophy* shone upon some Divines, *Quibus sordescere cæperunt Sacrarum literarum interpretamenta, quæ hujus lucis radiis non illustrata prodierunt.* It seems the Divines of his way despised and vilified all Interpretations of Scripture (whether by Fathers or Schoolmen, or by whomsoever made) that were not enlightned with the beams of this new-risen Star: so that all Expositions of Scripture that were made before *Des Cartes* his happy days, must be condemned to the Dust and Moths, as useless and good for nothing.

cap. 6. par. 2.

thing. Which by the way serves a little to abate my wonder at the daring folly of some Novelists, in whose Writings I find many absurd, distorted, self-contradicting Expositions of Scripture, not without the highest scorn cast upon all dissenting Interpreters. It seems they are of this Authors persuasion, and perhaps have lighted their Candle at his dark Lanthorn. But truly, as I do not very well relish the modesty of our Exercitator in this Discourse, so I do as little admire his Logick. For what a wilde consequence is this, because the Ancients used the *Platonick* or *Eclectick* Philosophy as their Rule of Interpretation, and the Schoolmen used the *Peripatetick* as their Rule of Expounding; therefore the *Cartesian* Philosophy, that differs widely from them all, is the surest and most infallible Interpreter? Let no man mistake me, as if I hereby intended any sinister reflection on that noble Author, whom the person I am dealing with pretends to follow. I willingly allow him all the honour that his great Parts and Studi-

ous Inquiries may have merited, without the leaſt detraction: Though I think ſome of his greateſt admirers have done him no ſmall injurie, partly by their Superlative Elogies given to him, together with their ready ſwallowing, and pertinacious defending all his dictates; but eſpecially by extending his Rules and Methods to matters of Supernatural Revelation, beyond his declared meaning, if his own word may be taken, which I am not concerned to examine.

2. What uſe ſoever former Writers Ancient or Modern have made of their reſpective Philoſophy in expounding Scripture, it doth not yet appear that they own'd it for their Rule: and if they did, I am ſure they did amiſs. I highly honour the memory of the ancient Fathers; but I never took them for infallible in their Interpretations, nor did they themſelves; nor I ſuppoſe doth the Exercitator, who yet contends for Philoſophy to be the Infallible Interpreter. And for the Schoolmen, himſelf cites ſome Authors, and might have cited

cited many more, and those of great eminency in the Church of *Rome* it self, who have long since complained of them for corrupting Divinity by mixing it with their Philosophick Notions; and yet we never find any of these so absurd as to assert Philosophy to be the Scriptures Interpreter.

3. Lastly, let it be consider'd, whether this Author have not greatly forgotten and grosly contradicted himself, in using this Argument from Example: for himself professeth to maintain a new and strange opinion in asserting Philosophy to be the Interpreter of Scripture*. And in his Prologue, he tells us, that he had consulted with the Divines of all Places and Ages (that is, I suppose, with their Writings) to find out what method they used, and what Rule they followed in their Interpretation of Scripture; but could find nothing that would give him satisfaction: and therefore he resolved to lay them

* *Ph. Scr. Int. c. 5. par. 1. Novam eamq; paradoxam (sententiam) adstruere in praesentiarum est animus, scil. hoc munus (interpretandi Scripturas) competere Philosophiae, hancq; esse normam certam ac minime fallacem, tam S. libros explicandi quam illorum explicationes explorandi.*

all aside, and try what he could do *proprio marte*, by his own industry; and that after long disquisition, he at last fell upon this onely sure and infallible way, which he here commends to the World. Now I would know how he could speak this, and yet believe what he here alledgeth, that both Fathers and Schoolmen, and other Modern Writers took this course of making Philosophy the Rule of Expounding Scripture?

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

1. *Answer given to a sixth Argument, drawn from instances in some considerable Scripture-assertions supposed not interpretable without Philosophy*; viz. *Such as speak of God after the manner of Man.* 2. *Our Saviours Words about the Eucharist.* 3. *The Doctrine of the Trinity.*

"IN the next place the Exercitator § 1.
"argues from instances in some con- Arg. 6.
"siderable Scripture-Assertions, which *Ph. Scr. Int. c. 6. par.* 3.
"(he says) cannot be interpreted but by
"having recourse to Philosophy as the
"Rule of Exposition. And here he
"insists upon three particulars, which
"I shall examine in order.

First he instances in those Scriptures 1.
that speak of God ἀνθρωποπαθῶς, after the manner of Men, ascribing to him the Members of an Humane Body, and the affections of an Humane Soul; besides Sense and Motion, with many other

other things not competible to an Incorporeal, much less to an infinite and immutable Being. Touching which Expressions, whereas it is truely cautioned by Divines of all sorts, that these are to be explicated by such Scriptures as speak otherwise of God, suitably to his immaterial and unchangeable Being: this Author boldly affirms, that the Scripture of it self is insufficient to direct us; and that there is no way to resolve us which of these different Expressions of Scripture are to be taken properly, and which not, unless we take the Principles of Philosophy and Natural Reason for our guide.

Sol. To this I answer: That Gods infinite and immense Perfections are much more clearly and fully discover'd to us in Scripture than by Natural Light. The Apostle says, 1 *Cor.* 2. 11. *What man knows the things of a Man, save the Spirit of Man which is in him; even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God.* Therefore the best and safest Conceptions we can have of God, are

are those which we learn from the Spirit of God speaking to us in and by the Scripture. And if this Author were not extremely prejudiced by a partial fondness for his own darling conceits, he might know, that plain ordinary Christians, who never had ought to do with Philosophick Learning, have by their sole acquaintance with the Scriptures, come to much clearer and sounder conceptions of God, his Nature, and Attributes, than the learnedst Philosopher that ever the World had, could attain by all his Wit and Study without Scripture Light: and that to any Reader that is not prepossessed with false and absurd Notions of God by his own vain imagination, and misguided Reason, the Scriptures that speak so differently concerning that Supreme Being, if prudently compared together, and the circumstances on each side considered, do sufficiently to the satisfaction of sober Minds, discover to us their true and genuine Sense, without giving the least countenance to the sottish and irrational conceits of the *Anthropomor-*

pomorphites; though a cavelling daring Wit may and will find ſomething to quarrel with, where the matter is as clear as the noon-day Sun.

§ 2. His next inſtance is, The Words of our Saviour at the inſtitution of his laſt Supper, *This is my Body:* which the Papiſts interpret for Tranſubſtantiation: The Lutherans for Conſubſtantiation: The Reformed Churches deny both, underſtanding the words *tropically*; whoſe Senſe he ſays can be no otherwiſe defended but by the Principles of Natural Philoſophy.

Sol. For anſwer to this, I grant, That in clearing this controverſie, there is good uſe of the Principles of Philoſophy and Natural Reaſon; and ſo there is alſo of *Senſe*; which undeniably convinceth us, that what we ſee, and feel, and taſte, is Bread. Yet ſure we are not to make Senſe the Rule of Interpreting Scripture. But the true and proper Rule of Interpreting our Saviours Words, [*This is my Body*] is that which the Scripture it ſelf, and that alone hath

hath taught us; *viz. That Christ assumed a true Humane Body:* which is a truth that Reason and Philosophy could never inform us of, it being a matter of pure Revelation. Now this being laid down as the chief *Postulatum*; the thing to be inquired into is, *What is the nature of an Humane Body?* and what are the essential Properties of all natural Bodies? And this Natural Philosophy instructs us in, as being no matter of Revelation, but lying within the compass of Natural Light, which teacheth us that every Natural Body is quantitative and divisible, and confined to one certain place; consequently that the Bread in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, cannot be properly and substantially the Body of *Christ*, which (as Scripture informs us) was once nailed to the Cross, but is now glorified in Heaven. Now the force of all this for the expounding of our Saviours Words, lies in the former supposition, *That our Saviour assumed a true natural Humane Body*, together with what was even now mentioned; *That the same Body of Christ which he assumed*,

assumed, is at the right Hand of God in Heaven: both which are Scripture-Revelations. Besides, there is a wide difference between these two, a *help* to overthrow a false Interpretation, and the *Rule* of establishing the true one. Philosophy may do the former, but not the latter. As in this controversie, the Principles of Reason and Philosophy do convincingly assure us that Bread is not, cannot be the Body of a Man. But they cannot assure us what was our Saviours meaning, when holding the Bread in his Hand, he said, *This is my Body:* this must be resolved by what the Scripture it self speaks either there, or elsewhere.

§ 3. 3. His third and last instance is the Doctrine of the Trinity, which he says cannot be cleared without having recourse to Philosophy: and here, having derided the attempts of many to explicate and confirm this great Mistery by their Metaphysical Speculations; he highly applauds the learned *Keckerman* for his happy endeavors in unfolding and demonstrating it, *Ex immotis Philosophiæ*

Philisophiæ fundamentis, out of the unmoveable Foundations of Philosophy.

Sol. To this I answer, That the curious speculations and Philosophick niceties of the Schools about the Doctrine of the Trinity, have done it more prejudice than advantage, and given greater occasion to the adverse part to reject it, when they found so strange and incomprehensible a Mystery defended by such thin, airy, cobweb notions. It had been much better, if Men had contented themselves with those discoveries the Scripture makes of this inexplicable Mystery, it being a Doctrine purely of Supernatural Revelation, and not at all discoverable by Natural Light. The Arguments from Reason and Philosophy brought for the proof of it, by the learned *Keckerman*, and by *Clanbergius* a late *Cartesian*, are examined by *Vogolsangius* in his *Indignatio Justa*, &c. and discarded as insufficient. I grant, that in this, (as in many other Doctrines) it may be of good use to shew that there is nothing in what the Scripture says of it, that contradicts any

any ſound Principle of Reaſon. But to go about by the Principles of Reaſon or Philoſophy poſitively to demonſtrate the truth of it, is a thing which I take to be impoſſible. I chuſe to ſay of this Myſtery, as one does of the Divine Eſſence, *Credendo intelligitur, adorando enarratur.* It is beſt underſtood by believing, and beſt declared by adoring. *He* (ſaith the late Biſhop of *Down*) *that ſhould go to Revelation to prove that nine and nine make eighteen, would be a Fool: and he would be no leſs, that goes about to prove a Trinity of perſons by natural Reaſon. Every thing muſt be derived from its own Fountain.* Thus *Aquinas* tells us, *He that by natural Reaſon attempts to prove the Trinity of perſons, doth a double prejudice to the Faith.* 1. *He derogates from its Dignity, it being proper to the Doctrine of Faith to be of ſuch things as exceed Mans Reaſon.* 2. *He hinders others from embracing the Faith, by uſing ſuch Arguments as are not cogent; which renders it obnoxious to the Infidels contempt.* This is plain in Scripture, that the Father is God,

Duct. Dub. li. 1. c. 2.

Aqu. par. 2. q. 32. a. 1

God, and the Holy Ghost is God: and that these are three, and all three are but one God: and for other subtleties and curious inquiries of busie and presumptuous Wits, without and beside the Written Word, I think the Truth of God never was, nor ever will be beholden to them.

CHAP. XV.

A seventh Argument, from the reasonableness of Religion, answered.

Arg. 7. ONe Argument more I shall touch, which I find alledged by two noted *Socinians*, *Smalcius* and *Schlichtingius* (as they are cited by a late learned Author in his *Socinianism. Confut.*) to prove Reason to be the Rule of deciding Controversies of Faith: which may be thought improveable upon the same grounds, to assert that Reason must be the Rule of interpreting Scripture. And it is, "That of the Apo-
"stle, where he asserts the Service that
Rom. 12. 1. "God requires of Christians, to be
"λογικὴν λατρείαν a reasonable service,
"that is, say they, a Service agreeable
"to Reason.

To this I answer two things,

Sol. 1. First, I know no cause to recede from the Sense that is usually given by our Interpreters, seeing it so fairly offers it

it self from the Words themselves: and therefore do judge, with the learned Dr. *Hammond* on the place, that the Apostle calling upon Christians *to present their Bodies a living Sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, even their reasonable service*; doth evidently oppose this to the Sacrifices of the Ceremonial Law, which were no other than irrational Creatures, first killed, and then offered up to God. But,

2. Secondly, Be it given (but not granted) that the Apostles meaning is what these Men put upon it, *viz.* That the Service God requires of Christians, is agreeable to Reason: I have already premised and asserted, that Christian Religion is perfectly rational; whence it will undeniably follow, that there is an excellent harmony, a full and complete accord betwixt Reason and Religion. And although some daring Wits that make high pretences to Reason, have, by their profane Jeers at the Misteries of Christianity, and their turning the Doctrines

and Phraſes of Holy Scripture into Drollery, contributed not a little to the Atheiſm of the preſent age; yet I am paſt all doubt, that no man is or can be an Atheiſt, that hath not firſt baffled and beſotted his Reaſon. If any therefore hath gone about to ſet Reaſon and Religion at variance, it hath been through ſome miſpriſion, taking ſome groundleſs imagination for Reaſon, or ſome corrupt opinion or practice for Religion. But if any ſhall hence argue, that Mans Reaſon is to be the Rule of Religion, or that Doctrines of Supernatural Revelation are to be interpreted, and the Senſe of them determined by Natural Principles, we deny the conſequence, and leave them to prove it. Our Saviour tells us that *his yoke is eaſie*; but if any ſhould thence Argue, that therefore our *eaſe* muſt be the *Rule* of interpreting his Commands, I think few would be found ſo blind or fooliſh (except Men of profligate and debauched Conſciences) that would admit of ſuch an abſurd Argumentation:

Mat. 11.

tion: And there is no less absurditity in this, That because Religion is a Reasonable Service, therefore our Reason must be the Rule of interpreting the Doctrines of Religion.

CHAP. XVI.

1. *A Tranſition to the Exercitators Reply to ſome Scriptures alledged by our Divines againſt his Heterodoxy. The fond Conceit of* Lud. Wolzogen, *That in this Controverſie Scripture is not to be heard, diſproved.* 2. *And his Plea that he makes for himſelf in his* Cenſura Cenſuræ, *diſabled.* 3. *A return to the Exercitators Expoſition of the Scriptures alledged by our Writers. His ſelf-contradiction noted. And the Scriptures cleared.*

§ 1. THe Exercitator having (after his manner) aſſerted his own Poſition, comes, in the ſeventh Chapter of his Diſcourſe, to anſwer the Scriptures that ſome have made uſe of to oppoſe it. Before I deal with them, I cannot but take notice of the diſingenuity of *Ludovicus Wolzogen*, who having undertaken the Patronage of the Proteſtant Cauſe againſt this Adverſary, doth ſo ſhamefully throw down his Arms, and

and run out of the Field: For when he comes at this seventh Chapter of his Antagonist (and again at his twelfth) wherein the Exercitator endeavors to evade or enervate the Scriptures brought against him this: valiant Champion not only waves the vindication of them; but for his own more plausible excuse, expressly maintains it to be a preposterous thing in this Controversie about the Interpretation of Scripture, to use or admit the testimony of Scripture at all; and affirms that the Cause must be decided by Reason: And therefore, as all along his Discourse, he never makes use of Scripture to defend himself, or strike his Adversary; so he lays an imputation of folly upon all our Divines that use this way of arguing in the present Case. And he gives two pitiful Arguments to prove this fond Assertion.

Lud. Wolzog. de Scripturar. Interprete p. 217.

1. "One is because the Controversie "is about the Scripture it self, which is "not to be heard in its own Cause, un"less such places can be alledged in the "explication whereof both parties a"gree.

Id. ib. p. 219.

Sol. To this I answer,

1. If this be granted, then whatsoever controversie we have with the Papists about the Authority, Perspicuity and Perfection of the Scriptures, though we have never so clear proof in the Scripture it self for these things, they must all be waved as invalid. But these have hitherto been accounted controverted Points of Faith, and consequently to be resolved from Scripture the only Rule of Faith: & so is this about the Scriptures Interpretation: however the Exercitator, and with him this Author, denies it; while yet both of them acknowledge it to be a Question, wherein the whole of Religion is concerned, and (next to that of the Scriptures Authority) the very foundation on which all Doctrines of Faith and Manners relie; and which involves in it whatsoever Differences or Controversies there are between dissenting parties in Religion, that own the Scriptures. And is it not strange that Men should own this Controversie to be so momentous and

Exercitator in Prologo, & c. 1. Wolzog. ubi sup. 5. & p. 96.

and fundamental, and yet to deny it to be a matter of Faith, or to be determined by Scripture Testimony? But,

2. Why may not the Scripture be heard speak for it self, as well as Reason for it self? The Question under debate is whether the Rule of Interpreting Scripture, be the Scripture it self, or Mans Reason? Does not this as nearly touch Reason as Scripture? And yet must that be allowed to give testimony in its own Cause and not the Scripture? It appears by this (as by many other passages in his Book) that this Author is a better friend to the Exercitators opinion, than to the Protestant Doctrine. And indeed,

2.

3. This is the very Language of our Popish Adversaries; who tell us, the Scripture cannot be its own Interpreter, because the Question is concerning it self. To which our Writers answer truely, That the Scripture being the Voice of God, its testimony for it self is above all other whatsoever, even in its own Cause.

3. *V. Rivet. Isagogen, cap. 19. § 30.*

His

2. *Wolz. ubi sup. p. 247.* His other Argument is, "Because till "the dissentient parties have agreed "about the Interpreter of the Scriptures "alledged, they have no Sense, and "therefore can testifie nothing: And upupon this account he condemns those of the Reformed Churches that alledge Scripture in this Controversie, and blames the Exercitator for answering their Allegations.

To this I answer,

Sol. 1. That any part of Scripture is without its Sense till it have an Interpreter, is a gross absurdity and falshood. The Scripture hath its Sense, whether any Man interpret it or no. Interpretation doth not (I am sure it should not) bring the Sense and put it into the Scripture, but receive it from the Scripture.

2. This Author acknowledges some Scriptures to be so clear, that the Sense is obvious: and if such Scriptures can be produced in the present Controversie (as no doubt they may) Why should the difference about the Interpreter, preclude them?

3. Were

3. Were this Argument allowed, it would for ever debarr us from alledging Scripture against the Romanists in any Controverſie that we have with them: it being notorious to all Men, that this is one great difference betwixt us and them, *who muſt be the Supreme Interpreter of Scripture?* which they challenge as the Priviledge of their Church, and we aſcribe to the Scripture it ſelf.

§ 2.

But it is a miſerable Plea that this Author makes elſewhere for himſelf, *viz.* "That he had to do with one "whom he eſteemed to be no Chriſtian, but an Heathen (for ſo he accounts "the Exercitator) who would no more "regard the Teſtimony of Scripture in "this Caſe, than a Jew would regard "any proof from the New Teſtament; "and therefore it was, that he declined dealing with him about thoſe "Teſtimonies from Scripture. It ſeems then he would make the World believe, that what he had ſaid about this, was onely ſpoken *ad hominem*.

Lu. Wol. Cenſ. Cenſuræ p. 233

By

Sol. By which it plainly appears, that our Author began to see he could not stand his ground, but was not so ingenuous as to confess his Error, and therefore runs behind this Bush to hide himself. For,

1. His Words, which I quoted before out of his Book, *De Scripturarum Interprete*, do evidently shew that he speaks according to his own Mind, that it was a preposterous thing in this Controversie to alledge the Testimony of Scripture, and that in this Case no such proof was to be allowed, (see him page 217. 219. and 247.) and not only so, but alledges the Reasons beforementioned (such as they are) for this wilde Position.

2. He knows very well that the Jews (to whom he compares his Antagonist) do not at all own the Authority of the new Testament, but professedly reject it: Whereas the Exercitator (whatever his Religion be) does avowedly own the Divine Authority of the Scripture, and declares himself willing to be dealt with

in

in that way, in that he cites our Divines Arguments from thence, and endeavors to answer them; for which this Author reproves him. So that the case is not the same. And yet I appeal to the Authors Reason: Should any Jewish Writer either cite any Testimonies out of the New Testament for himself, or endeavor, by his own Interpretations, to evade any Testimonies thence alledged against him (which is plainly the Case here) whether should a Christian that pretends to answer him, do well to say, That the New Testament is not here to be heard, and that it were a prepostorous thing to alledge it? Should he not rather endeavor to answer the objections that are made, and clear the places cited? And if in case he should do, as this Author doth here, might he not justly be condemned for a Betrayer of the Christian Cause? If it be said, that though the Exercitator acknowledge the Divine Authority of the Scriptures, yet he holds them to be universally ambiguous and obscure, further than Humane Reason expounds them;

Object. *Lu. Wolz. loc. cit.*

them; and therefore it was to no purpose to use Scripture to him, till they had agreed about the Rule of Interpretation. I answer, The Exercitator does indeed charge the Scripture with obscurity because of its ambiguity; but it is upon this ground, because, he says, all words whatsoever are ambiguous: If therefore this should shut out the Scripture from bearing witness in the Controversie, then all Arguments from Reason, must upon the same account, be excluded too; for they must be made up of Words and Phrases, the ambiguity whereof (according to the Exercitators Doctrine) will render them obscure, as well as the Scripture.

Sol.

§. 3. Come we now to speak something to the Scriptures alledged by our Divines, which the Exercitator labors to evade. But methinks it is a pleasant thing to see how he betrays his own Cause, by acting against his own Method and Principles. For having all along cried up Philosophy as the onely Interpreter of Scripture; when himself comes to

Ph. Scr. Int. c. 7.

interpret the Scriptures brought against him, one would think he should bring his own Tools to this Work, and labor, by Philosophick Principles, to make out the Sense that he gives of these Scriptures. But he waves this, and seeks to fetch out his own Sense from the Scripture it self, by examining the Antecedents and Consequents, and the Authors scope. Now he either takes this way of Interpretation to be right, or he does not: If he do not, he doth but juggle with his Reader, and designs to cheat him: but if he do indeed think it to be right, he yields the Cause, that not Philosophy, but the Scripture it self is the Rule of Interpretation.

Now for the Scriptures alledged: The first is that in 1 *Cor.* 1. 19, 20, 21. where the Apostle speaks very contemptibly of Humane Wisdom; the like may be said of the next, 1 *Cor.* 2. 6. Now in these places, saith the Exercitator, the Apostle does not go about to deny or condemn true Wisdom, but the earthly, sensual Wisdom of the World, that is grounded upon vain opinions, and puts Men

1 *Cor.* 1. 19, 20. 21. 1 *Cor.* 2. 6.

Men upon the eager purſuit of earthly things, ſuch as Riches, and Honors, and Senſual Pleaſures.

Sol. I anſwer, The Apoſtle, having to do with thoſe who thought meanly of the Doctrine of *Chriſt* Crucified, and affected a name for that which the world counted Wiſdom; endeavors to lay all Humane Wiſdom in the duſt, and to diſcover its inſufficiency to conduct man to true happineſs; for which he prefers the Doctrine of the Goſpel (which was ſo derided as fooliſhneſs) above that which the World ſo much admired. This therefore is no impertinent allegation againſt the Exercitators opinion. That in 1 *Cor.* 2. 14. I have already preſſed in the proſecution of my firſt Argument; and have vindicated it from the corrupt gloſſes that ſome have put upon it.

Col. 2.8. The laſt is that in *Coloſſ.* 2. 8. *Beware leſt any man ſpoil you through Philoſophy, and vain deceit.* Here, ſaith the Exercitator, the Apoſtle doth not condemn ſound Philoſophy, but that which is vain and uſeleſs.

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I answer, Undoubtedly he doth not *condemn* Philosophy truely so called: But he gives a caution to take heed of being deceived by it; as Men may be, when the use of it is extended beyond its Line, and is not kept within its own proper Bounds. *Thus*, saith our learned *Davenant*, *Philosophy or Humane Reason, which is the Mother of Philosophy, is always found vain and deceitfull, when it is carried beyond its proper limits, That is*, says he, *when it attempts to determine of those things, that fall not under the cognisance of Natural Reason; such are those that belong to the Worship of God, and to the Salvation of Man, as the Points of Justification, Reconciliation with God, and other Matters of Faith, that are above the reach of Reason, and depend altogether upon Divine Revelation.* Sol. *Davenant. in Coloss.* 2. 8.

CHAP. XVII.

1. *That Sound Philosophy asserts nothing contrary to Scripture granted.* 2. *Two Principles instanced in, and* Wolzogen's *Tergiversation taxed.* 3. *The two great Articles of the Creation of all things out of nothing, and the Resurrection of the same numerical Body proved against the Exercitator, to be asserted in Scripture.*

§ 1. *Ph. Scr. Int. c. 3. p. 1*

THE Exercitators next Work is to answer the great Argument, which, he says, some urge against his opinion, *viz.* Philosophy, and consequently Humane Reason, asserts many things that are repugnant to Divinity and the Scriptures, and therefore they cannot be allow'd for the Rule of Interpreting Scripture. He denies the Antecedent; and so do I. What Authors they be in the Reformed Churches that thus argue, I know not. But this I know, that it is no uncommon thing for pugnacious Wits, to draw the Sword upon

upon the shadow of a Dream, and make Hector-like declamations against *Utopian* Adversaries. Set aside those Authors, who are engaged by some Atheological Hypothesis, which they have espoused (as the Papists and the Lutherans in the Doctrine of the *Eucharist*) I know not any Man of Learning and Understanding, who hath such a thought, that there is any thing in Scripture derogatory or contradictory to true Philosophy or Sound Reason; or that believes any thing true in Philosophy to be false in Divinity. Whatsoever is true any where, is true every where. Here therefore our Author may put up his Dagger.

§ 2. But there is one thing which I cannot well pass over, That the Exercitator pretending to confute those who assert a contrariety between the Principles of Philosophy and Divinity, and instancing in these two, *Ex nihilo nihil fit*, and *Idem non potest, numericè reproduci*, Instead of solving the knot, he cuts it, and plainly affirms both these

Ph. Scr. Int. c. 8. par. 2.

Principles to be true, abſolutely, and without limitation both in Philoſophy and Divinity, confidently aſſerting that the Scripture doth no where teach us, *That the World was made of nothing*, or that *the ſame numerical Body ſhall riſe at the laſt day*. And here *Wolzogen* unworthily deſerts the Chriſtian Cauſe, not vouchſafing to write one word in vindication of theſe grand Truths againſt this bold Adverſary; but tells us he is content the Man ſhould enjoy his own opinion, though, he ſays, he could eaſily have refuted him: Which makes his ſilence the more inexcuſable, and brings him under greater ſuſpition of Heterodoxy, notwithſtanding all his Rhetorical Flouriſhes. But it is time I ſhould return to our Author, who, if he had not been too much in love with Novelty, might without the leaſt prejudice to his Cauſe (unleſs it have ſome other Monſter in the Belly of it that is not yet come to the birth) have anſwered, that theſe Axioms are true in a limited Senſe both in Philoſophy and Divinity; *viz.* That by a finite

nite created Power, nothing can be made of nothing; and that by the like limited power, the same numerical Body that perisheth, cannot be reproduced. But that nevertheless to an infinite Power all things that imply not contradiction are possible.

§. 3. But it seems by this Authors words, that he disowns the received Doctrine of the worlds Creation out of Nothing; and the Reproduction of the same individual Body.

1. By denying the former, he must necessarily maintain the Eternity of Preexistent Matter: whereas if God be the Maker of all Beings besides himself (as the Scripture sufficiently assures us) then nothing besides himself could be Eternal; but he must in making the World make the *Matter* whereof the World consists, which *Matter* therefore must be made of nothing. The first Article in the most ancient Creeds (as the Reverend Bishop of *Chester* hath observed) had instead of these words *Maker of Heaven and Earth*, or toge-

Dr. *Pearson Expos. of the Creed, Art.* 1.

ther with them, this Clauſe, *The Maker of all things viſible and inviſible*, agreeably to that of the Apoſtle, *Coloſſ.* 1.16. which diſtribution is ſo comprehenſive, that it will not admit of any Exception, all things whatſoever being either viſible or inviſible; and whatſoever can be ſuppoſed neceſſary to the making of the World, it muſt of neceſſity come under one of theſe two Members of the diſtribution, and conſequenly be of Gods making. And indeed if it were otherwiſe, then ſomething elſe beſides God, muſt have a *neceſſary, uncreated, independent* Being: which carries with it ſo broad a Contradiction, as Mans Reaſon left fair to it ſelf cannot allow. Again,

2. By diſclaiming the latter, this Author evidently denies the Reſurrection; for that imports the riſing again of the ſame Body that fell, according to that known Speech of *Damaſcen* ſo oft cited by our Divines, Ἀνάστασις ἐστὶ πάλιν ἀνάστασις τοῦ πεπτωκότος σώματος. And if the ſame numerical Body riſe not, but another is made *de novo* for the Soul to animate, this

this is not a Reſurrection but a new Creation; and then the firſt Creation of the World may as aptly be called a Reſurrection as that which is ſo ſtiled by the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture. But I think the Scripture ſpeaks plain enough in this Caſe, (though this Author will not own it) when it ſays, that at the laſt day, *This corruptible muſt put on incorruption, and this mortal muſt put on immortality.* And that our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* ſhall then *change our vile Body, that it may be made like unto his glorious Body.* And that, *If the Spirit of him that raiſed up Jeſus from the dead, dwell in us, he that raiſed up Chriſt from the dead, ſhall alſo quicken our mortal bodies by his ſpirit that dwelleth in us.* Add to this that Argument from the deſcription of the place whence the Reſurrection ſhall begin; which I cannot better repreſent to the Reader than in the words of the learned Biſhop of *Cheſter*, *They which ſleep in the duſt of the Earth* (Dan. 12. 2.) *and they which are in the Graves,* (Joh. 5. 28.) *ſhall hear the Voice and Riſe. And,* Rev.

1 *Cor.* 15. 53. *Phil.* 3. 20, 21. *Rom.* 8. 11. *Expoſ. of the Creed,* p. 382.

20. 13. *The Sea shall give up the dead which are in it, and Death and the Grave deliver up the dead which are in them. But if the same Bodies did not Rise, they which are in the dust, should not revive; If God should give us any other Bodies than our own, neither the Sea nor the Grave should give up their dead. That shall Rise again which the Grave gives up; the Grave hath nothing to give up, but that Body which was laid into it: therefore the same Body which is Buried, shall at the last day be revived.* And whereas the Socinians (who are our Adversaries in this, as well as in many other Articles of our Faith) to evade this Argument, will have the *Graves* spoken of in *Joh* 5. 28. to be the *Graves* of ignorance and impiety there meant; and the Rising to be Mens coming to the knowledge of *Christ*, &c. the aforesaid learned Person answers them, *That Christ expressly speaks of bringing Men to Judgement*, vers. 27. *and divides those that are to come out of their Graves into two Ranks*, vers. 29. *neither of which can be so understood: The first are those which*

Ibid. in Marg.

which have done good before they come out of their Graves; these therefore could not be the Graves of Ignorance and Impiety, from which no good can come: The second are such who have done evil, and so remain as evil Doers, and therefore cannot be said to come forth of the Graves of Ignorance and Impiety, or to Rise by the Preaching of the Gospel to newness of life, because they are expresly said to come forth to the Resurrection of Damnation.

But if the Exercitators Principles will allow him to write after the rate he here doth, I think none that hath any veneration for the Scriptures, will be over-fond of such a corrupt and fallacious Interpreter. But when Men are hammering out a new Divinity, they must either find out a new Scripture, or a new way of Expounding the Old, to countenance their own Dreams, that when, by this Artifice, they have turned out the true Christianity, they may bring us in a Pagan Religion finely set out in the stately dress of Eternal Reason.

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No wonder they cry out of Syſtems as Chains and Fetters to their deſultorious and volatile Wits. They had rather (as one ſays of wanton Heads) be the Purchaſers of Error than the Heirs of Truth. Of whom the Lord *Verulam* * gives us a very fit Character. *Certè ſunt, qui cogitationum Vertigine delectantur, ac pro ſervitute habent fide fixa & Axiomatis conſtantibus reſtringi, Liberi Arbitrii uſum in Cogitando non minùs quam in Agendo affectantes.* Verily, ſays he, there are ſome who are delighted in a giddineſs of opinions, and take it for a bondage to be reſtrained by a fixed Faith and ſetled Principles, no leſs affecting the uſe of their Free Will in thinking than in acting. And ſo I have diſpatcht the firſt Part of my Work, and proceed to the ſecond.

Lu. Viers in Aug. de C.D.l. 18. *c.*41. *Novi hominem non tam doctum quam arroganter jactabundumque, qui ſe & ſcripturum multa profitebatur: Et non ſecus vituraturum quæ quis antea dixiſſet, quam aſpides vel baſiliſcos: longe enim malle ſe ſcientem prudenterque falſum pro vero affirmare, quam alienæ opinioni acquieſcere.* * *Sermon. fidel. cap. de Veritate.*

Part II.

Part II.

The Holy Scripture the onely ſure Interpreter of it ſelf.

CHAP. I.

1. *The Propoſition aſſerting the Scripture to be its own Interpreter, laid down.* Lud. Walzogen's *raſhneſs and inconſiſtency with himſelf in giving the Senſe of our Reformed Divines in this Point.* 2. *Their true meaning cleared, and ſomething touched about the Analogy of Faith.* 3. *The Judgment of Divines Ancient and Modern in this Buſineſs.*

HAving endeavoured to diſprove the new pretended Rule of Interpretation, I come, in the next place, to aſſert the Doctrine of the Reformed Churches, and § 1.

and lay down this Propoſition, that the Holy Scripture is its own onely ſure Interpreter. But before I enter upon the opening and confirming of it, I muſt remove ſomething that lies in my way. *Ludovicus Wolzogen* in his two Books *de Scripturarum Interprete*, attempting to anſwer the Exercitator, profeſſeth to maintain the received Doctrine of the Proteſtant Churches in this Point: but pretends to a more clear and diſtinct handling of it, than hath hitherto been performed by our Divines. Whereas indeed, that which he propounds to maintain is a novel fancy of his own, never yet owned by any Orthodox Divine that I have read or heard of: *viz.* That the Scripture interprets it ſelf by the *Uſus loquendi*, the cuſtom of ſpeaking; and that this is the onely ſure and undoubted Rule of Interpretation. But whereas he moſt immodeſtly chargeth all that have gone before him, with confuſedneſs in this Controverſie, as not well underſtanding either it or themſelves; his learned ſelf, when he comes to take it in hand,

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is so intricate and perplex, so various and inconstant, that it's a difficult matter to understand what he would have. He turns himself into so many forms, and winds himself so many wayes, and falls into so many self-contradictions, that he seems to design the entangling of his Reader, and the hiding of himself in a Castle of Clouds.

First, One while he will have us understand this *Usus loquendi*, of the vulgar use of speech, common to the Scriptures with other Writings: and gives us his Reason why this must be the Rule of Interpretation, because common use is the onely Master of Speech, and the Custome of Speakers and Writers gives Law to the signification of Words; and that the use of Speech is formed by much and long Custom, which, when it hath at last prevailed, does, as it were, imprint a publick Character upon Words, which come by *tacite* consent to be received of all: and he professes he sees no Reason why any should deny that the Interpretation of Scripture depends upon this use of Speech:

1. *Wolzog. de Scripturar. Interprete p.* 26. & 42.

Ib. 46, 47, &c.

Ib. p. 70, 71, 72.

Speech: which himſelf ſays is founded upon Humane Inſtitution, but adopted and approved by the Wiſdom of God in Enditing the Scripture. Now that this *Uſus loquendi* ſhould be the Rule of Interpreting the Holy Scriptures, is far wide from the Truth, and from the Judgment of all Proteſtants, and as far as I know of all other Expoſitors. For,

1. When they ſay the Scripture is its own Interpreter, (or which is all one) the Rule of Interpretation to it ſelf, they underſtand it of ſomething in the Scripture, that is peculiar to the Scripture, and not any thing that is common to it with other Writings: But the vulgar and cuſtomary uſe of Speech is the ſame in all Writings, where the ſame Language is made uſe of.

2. It is granted on all hands, that this *Uſus loquendi*, or Cuſtom of Speech, hath its place among thoſe means that I ſpake of in the entrance of my Diſcourſe, that do remotely conduce to Interpretation; but it reaches no further nextly and immediately than to Ver-

Verbal Interpretation (which is called Translation) by guiding us to the right understanding of Words and Phrases, and the several Modes of Speech. But this comes not up to that which we call Real Interpretation, which is the Exposition of the Author's Mind signified by those Words as they are so and so placed. We do not therefore shut out the *Use of Speech*, but suppose it, and look at something further. For instance, suppose I were to inquire into the Sense of that place, *Joh.* 1. 1. (which is the instance given by *Vander Weayen*) I may, by the *Use of Speech*, know what these several Words, *Beginning*, and *Word*, and *God*, signifie: But I must have something else to guide me to the right meaning of the entire Sentence, *In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* And *Wolzogen* himself acknowledges, that there is a wide difference between words taken singly, and in their first original, and taken as conjoined in Propositions. I may add with very good reason, that there is also

Adverf. Wolzog. li. 2. p. 12.

Lu. Wol. li. 2. p. 107.

alſo a wide difference between Propoſitions taken ſingly, and taken in ſuch or ſuch a contexture of Diſcourſe. Now the uſe of Speech will not help us to diſtinguiſh here.

3. How can the common uſe of Speech be a Rule in Matters of pure Revelation? I think all acknowledge, that the Senſe of Words varies according to the difference of the ſubject matter about which they are uſed. Now matters of pure Revelation are ſo remote from vulgar uſe, that they had never been ſpoken or written by any Men, if the Holy Ghoſt had not Endited them, and communicated them to us in the Scripture. And the Apoſtle tells us, that theſe things are delivered *not in Words which Mans Wiſdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth.*

1 Cor. 2. 13.

4. If the common uſe of Speech be ſo ſure a Rule of Interpretation as this Author makes it, I wonder what was in his Mind, to ſay of the Penmen of Scripture, *That if they were now living amongſt us, they could not be the ſuffi-*

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cient Interpreters of their own Writings, because they often wrote they knew not what. Certainly the customary use of Speech which obtained in the times wherein they wrote, must needs be much better known to them than it can be to any now living. Why then might not they interpret their own Writings, if they were now with us, having the best insight into that which this Author cries up for the onely sure Rule of Interpretation?

5. If the customary use of Speech must be the Rule of Interpretation, the inconvenience urged by the Exercitator *cap.* 11. *par.* 6. will not easily, if at all, be avoided: *viz.* the interpreting of Scripture according to the erroneous apprehension of the Vulgar.

6. If this be so certain a Rule, as he will have it, so as that he who uses it, shall not fail to find out the true Sense of Scripture (for so himself speaks *) how is it that the Sense of Scripture may not be found in all parts one as well as another? for the *use of Speech* is the same in all. And yet he acknowledges,

* *Wolzog. Sc. Int. p.* 12.

ledges, that in many things (not necessary to Salvation) let the Reader be never so diligent in his search, he cannot find the meaning of Scripture: and the reason hereof, he says, is to be fetcht, not from the nature of the thing, nor from the darkness of our minds, but *ex ipsa constitutione Scripturæ*, from the very frame of Scripture it self.

Id. ib. p. 15, 16 & p. 172, 173, 174.

2. Secondly, But now, whether this learned Author did not well consider what he wrote, or had not well digested his own Notions, or whether he designed to amuse his Reader with intricacies and ambiguities, or whether he were aware of the inconvenience of his former Expressions, and their liableness to exception, or what other were the cause, I shall not inquire: But this is plain to any that attentively reads his Discourse, that when he had once and again given the honour of being the onely sure Rule of Interpretation of Scripture, to the *common and customary use of Speech*: he afterwards falls to *a singular use of Speech*, [a] distinct from the vulgar, arising from the different Character of

[a] *Id. p. 76, & 227.*

of the Writer, the different occasion of Writing, the different nature of the things about which he Treats; and that under this singularity of the *usus loquendi*, the custom of Speech, we are to consider the Antecedents and the Consequents of a Text, [b] and the parallel places. And elsewhere he says, [c] all the circumstances of the place under consideration are to be examined: and this he calls, *Usus loquendi Scripturarius* [d] the Scripture use of Speaking. And when he objects against himself, [e] that the customary manner of speaking is dubious and uncertain, he answers it thus, That though it be so, yet God's manner of Speech in Scripture is fixed. So that what was before called the *common* and *vulgar use*, is now confined to *God's use*, and the *Scripture-use* of Speaking; which certainly does not receive Law from the custom and consent of Men; but is wholly framed and ordered by the disposal of Divine Wisdom, though in it he makes use of such words, as receive their single signification from common use.

[b] *Id.* p. 79.
[c] p. 132, & 137.
[d] p. 127.
[e] p. 138.
v. etiam p. 262, 263.

f Cens. Cens. p. 121

Besides, this Author tells us elsewhere [f] that *Usus loquendi*, or custom of Speech, includes in it the Analogy of Faith, and all other things that are taken out of Scripture, in order to the finding out of its true Sense. Now if this be indeed the meaning of his *Usus loquendi*, his opinion comes very near to that of the Reformed Churches, if it be not the same with it. But then what needed all this stir, as if our Divines had not discovered their Minds plainly and distinctly, but this Author must come and mend it? whereas he hath rather darkned and obscured it by his intricate and inconsistent Discourse. For whoever before him, took *Usus loquendi* in such a sense as this? And I much wonder that he who is so much for the *custom of Speech*, should vary so widely from it in his Writing. For I am sure this Phrase *Usus loquendi*, according to that mode of Speech that hath hitherto obtained, was never taken so comprehensively as to include the scope of the Text, with the Antecedents and Consequents, and all other circumstances,

ces, and the Analogy of Faith, and what ever lies in the Scripture that serves to the discovery of its true sense. Except Men will assume a power to themselves of coining a new Sense of Words, I cannot imagine what ground they can have to talk after the rate of this Author.

Our Divines speak much more properly and clearly in this business, *viz.* That the Holy Spirit of God hath, in Enditing the Scripture, so attempered his Speech, and so ordered and disposed the several Parts and Parcels of this Sacred Book, that his Mind (so far as it is necessary for us to know it) may be discovered, either from the obvious sense of the particular Sentences and Propositions of Scripture considered in that Order and dependence wherein they are placed, or by a due comparison of one part of Scripture with another; so as that the Reader may gather the Sense of Scripture from the Scripture it self. This is that which our Divines mean, when they say that

the Scripture is its own Interpreter. And when they ſay at any time, that the Spirit of God is the Interpreter of Scripture, either they ſpeak of the *Objective evidence* that the Spirit gives of the Senſe of Scripture; and then they underſtand it of the Spirit as ſpeaking in the Scripture; which being the Voice of the Spirit, is to us (as I ſaid) our Supream Rule: Or they ſpeak of the Spirit as the *efficient cauſe* of that *Subjective light* that is let into our Minds inabling us to underſtand the Scriptures. And this belongs to another inquiry, and doth not concern the Queſtion about the Rule of Interpretation. Now when our Writers ſay, the Scripture is its own Interpreter, they are to be underſtood *Metonymically*. As when they ſay the Scripture is the Supream Judge of all Controverſies of Faith, they mean no more but that it is *Judex Normatis*, or the Supream Rule of Judgement, according to which Controverſies are to be ultimately decided; ſo by proportion is it in the preſent Caſe. And as when the Papiſts ſpeak of the infallible deci-

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ding of Controversies, whether they say the Pope is the infallible Judge, or the Sentence given by the Pope is the infallible Rule of decision, it comes all to one. So when our Divines say sometimes, that the Spirit speaking in the Scripture is the infallible Interpreter of Scripture, and other while, that the Scripture is the infallible Rule of Interpretation, here is no such difference as should just give occasion to any to say, that our Divines speak variously or uncertainly, or that they agree not one with another, or with themselves; for in the issue the meaning of them all is one and the same.

Now here I must look back upon what I had said in the Introduction to my Discourse, concerning the special, immediate means of Interpretation; *viz.* a due observation of the several circumstances of the Scripture to be Expounded; and the comparing of Scripture with Scripture. In the use of which means lies the applying of the right Rule of Interpretation: It is the using of Scripture to expound Scri-

pture. And when a dark or difficult Scripture is compared with ſome other, wherein the ſame Truth or Doctrine is more clearly and perſpicuouſly delivered, this is conceived by many learned Men to be intended in that of the Apoſtle concerning *the Analogy of Faith*, *Rom.* 12. 6. Whether it be ſo or no, I ſhall not at preſent debate, much leſs determine; Nor ſhall I inquire whether that ὑποτύπωσις ὑγιαινόντων λόγων *form of ſound Words*, ſpoken of by the ſame Apoſtle, in 2 *Tim.* 1. 13. be the ſame with this ἀναλογία πίστεως as ſome conceive it is. But this I may have leave to ſay, that I ſee no incongruity or inconvenience in uſing the Expreſſion, or in ſaying that to explain obſcure places of Scripture by ſuch as are more clear and eaſie, is to expound Scripture according to the Analogy of Faith.

Quintil. li. 1. c. 6. *Analogy*, ſaith *Quintilian*, *is that which the Latines call Proportion, the force whereof is this, That what is in doubt may be referred to ſomething like it that is out of queſtion, that ſo the uncertain*

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may be proved by the certain. And why may not the like use of the Word be allowed in this case? Sure I am, eminent Writers both of the Roman and Reformed Churches have thus used it. *Analogie*, says *Aquinas*, *is, when the truth of one Scripture is evidenced not to oppose the truth of another. The Analogie of Faith*, saith our learned *Whitaker*, *is the constant and perpetual Sentence of Scripture in those places that are undoubtedly plain and obvious to our Understandings.* I might alledge to the like sense many more Authors, whose excellent Worth sets them sufficiently above the contempt of the Exercitator, and others of his mind, that jear and deride the Analogy of Faith. But waving the terms, that which I am concern'd to assert, is the thing it self; that in expounding Scripture we must be regulated and determined by the Scripture it self: and that whatsoever it speaks darkly and uncertainly in any place, is to be explained by it self in those other places, where it speaks more plainly; which plain places

Sum. p. 1. q. 1. a. 10.

Controvers. 1. q. 5. c. 9. *Analogia fidei nihil aliud est, quam constans & perpetua sententia Scripturæ in apertis & minime obscuris Scripturæ locis.*

ces do sufficiently interpret themselves by their own light.

§ 3. Now this way of Interpreting Scripture by it self, hath been approved of as the best and safest, by most eminent Authors Ancient and Modern. *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Iræneus*, *Hilary*, and others, are cited to this purpose, by [a] *Chamier*, [b] *Rivet*, [c] Dr. *Holdsworth*. *As* Esdras *and his Companions of old, so should we now interpret Scripture by Scripture, comparing among themselves those things that are Endited by the same Spirit*, saith the learned [d] *Grotius*, plainly referring to that in *Neh.* 8. 7, 8. Mr. [e] *Hales* of *Eaton* in his *Golden Remains* says, *Other Expositions may give Rules of Direction for understanding their Authors: but the Scripture gives Rules to expound it self. When the Fathers* (saith the [f] Bishop of *Down*) *confirmed an Exposition of one place of Scripture by the Doctrine of another, then and then onely they thought they had the* ἀπ δεξις γραφικὴ *the Scripture demonstration: and Matter of Faith and necessary*

a Panstrat. To. 1. l. 16. c. 6.
b Isagog. ad S. Sc. c. 18.
c Lection. Gresham. par. 1, Lect. 15.
d De Imp. sum. pot. circa sacra.
e Ser. on 2. Pet. 3. 16.
f Duct. Dubit. l. 3. c. 3. p. 369.

cessary belief: and that this was the duty of the Christian Doctors, Origen *doth expresly affirm.*

And however, the Roman Doctors (of this latter age especially) have vehemently contended against this, that the Authority of their Church may take place; yet we find *that* in some of them, that comes full up to what we say. I shall give one instance, [g] *Josephus a Costa* (as I find him cited by *Chamier* and *Rivet.*) *Nihil perinde Scripturam videtur aperire atque ipsa Scriptura. Itaq; diligens, attenta, frequensq; lectio, tum meditatio, & collatio Scripturarum, omnium summa Regula ad intelligendum mihi semper visa: nam ex aliis Scripturis aliæ optime intelliguntur.* Nothing seems to me to open the Scripture like the Scripture it self. Therefore diligent attentive, and frequent Reading, with Meditation, and comparing of Scriptures, hath alway seemed to me the chief Rule of all for understanding; for by some Scriptures others are best understood.

g *Li. 3 de Christo revelato c. 21.*

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Arguments to confirm the Propoſition; the firſt from the Scriptures ſole ſufficiency to be its own Interpreter, made good by three things, and firſt by its Perfection.

I proceed to ſome Arguments for the confirmation of this Second Propoſition. I ſhall paſs over many of thoſe that are numerouſly brought in by other Writers; chuſing to inſiſt upon thoſe that I take to be of greateſt force; and againſt which the greateſt endeavours have been uſed to overthrow them.

Arg. 1. My firſt ſhall be this: The Scripture is of all other beſt fitted to be the Rule to guide us in the determining of its own ſenſe and meaning. Nothing elſe is ſo well qualified for this uſe. And this may be evinced by its three properties, its Perfection, Perſpicuity, and Authentickneſs. It is the moſt Perfect, Perſpicuous,

Perspicuous, and Authentick Record of the Mind of God. Of these Three I must distinctly Treat.

First, this, and this only, is the perfect Record of the mind of God, fully manifesting it to us so far as it is necessary for us to know it, in order to our duty and our happiness. The Apostle speaks clearly and fully for this, 2 *Tim.* 3. 15, 16, 17. *From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto Salvation, through Faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration from God*, &c. Here two things are evidently Asserted, *viz.* That the Scriptures contain in them what is sufficient both for a Minister of Christ to Teach, and for any Christian to know, to make him wise unto Salvation. Neither of which can be, if there be not that in the Scripture it self, out of which the Mind of God therein deliver'd may be sufficiently understood without the suppliment of some other over-ruling Principle. For 1. How can the Scripture make any man wise unto Salvation, if it fall short Branch 1.

in

in point of objective Evidence necessary to beget that Divine Knowledge, wherein all saving Wisdom consists? 2. How can it sufficiently furnish a Minister for his work of instructing his Hearers, and conducting them to Life, if from thence he cannot fetch enough to clear the Truth he is to deliver to them?

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The ſecond branch of the firſt Argument; the Scriptures Perſpicuity proved.

SEcondly, the Scripture is a perſpicuous Revelation of God's Will. Whatſoever may be the ignorance or darkneſs of Men, which hinders them from knowing what God hath ſaid in theſe Sacred Records; yet the *objective perſpicuity* of them is generally aſſerted by *Proteſtants* againſt the *Romaniſts*. Not that all Truths revealed in Scripture are ſo low and common as in their own Nature to be obvious to Man's Underſtanding: but that (as to the manner of their delivery) they are ſo laid down in the Scripture, as that they may be underſtood by and from the Scripture: yet we mean not that every part or paſſage of Scripture is clear: (For that there are many difficulties therein we acknowledge.) But that the mind of God is ſomewhere or other in Scripture

Scripture plainly propounded, ſo far as it is neceſſary for us to know it, one part of it giving Light to another; ſo that the whole Scripture taken together is a Perſpicuous Manifeſtation of his will. This is proved by *Moſes*'s words in *Deut.* 30. 12, 13, 14. Speaking of the Law; and the Apoſtles words, *Rom.* 10. 6. *&c.* Speaking the ſame of the Goſpel. Hence the written Word is frequently compared to a Light, and is ſaid to give underſtanding to the Simple. Had not the Scriptures been Perſpicuous, how could *Timothy* in his Childhood have underſtood them? How could our *Saviour* out of them have convinced the *Sadduces* of the Doctrin of the Reſurrection? Or the *Apoſtles*, out of them prove irrefragably the truth of their Doctrin againſt the gainſaying *Jews*? Or how could the *Bereans* try the *Apoſtles* Doctrin by ſearching the Scriptures? Theſe are undeniable Proofs that the Scriptures are Perſpicuous, and that they have a plain and certain ſenſe obvious to a conſiderate Reader. But all this will ſignifie

Pſ. 19. 7. 8.
Pſ. 119. 105. 130.
2 *Pet.* 1. 19.
2 *Tim.* 3. 15
Matt. 22.
Acts.
Act. 17. 11.

signifie nothing, if the Scripture have not that Light in it that may discover it self, and clear up its own meaning without borrowing Light from some other Principle.

Now because much of the stress of this Cause lies on this, we must a little consider what is said against it. The late Romanists do generally cry out, that the Scriptures are obscure; partly that they may have the fairer colour to take them out of the Peoples hands, lest they should mistake, or pervert them, (though none among them have been more guilty of that than their Doctors of greatest name for Learning:) partly, that they may bring in their unwritten Traditions, as expository of Scripture-Revelations; and partly also, that they may establish a necessity of an Infallible, Visible Judge here on Earth to Interpret Scriptures, and decide all Controversies. Yet I know not any of them, but will own that many things in the Scripture are clear. But there is a late Writer, that denies this. My next work therefore

shall be to deal with him, and clear the Truth from his exceptions, in some of the following *Chapters* of this Discourse.

CHAP. IV.

The Exercitators exception against the Scriptures Perspicuity, from the ambiguity of words Answered.

THE *Belgick Exercitator* whom I have oft mentioned before, that he may make sure work, rises higher in denying the Scriptures Perspicuity, than any that I have ever met with: and with confidence affirms the Scripture to be universally obscure, and that no part of it is of it self clear and plain; and thereupon denies, that one part of Scripture can be expounded by another. Yea, this he laies as the foundation of his main Assertion, against

Ph. Scr. Int. c. 11. *par.* 6.
Ibid. c. 6. *p.* 1. & c. 11. *par.* 9.

against the Scriptures Interpreting it self.

And one great Reason he gives, is (what he hath taken a great deal of tedious pedantick pains to prove in his third Chapter,) "That all speech being made up of Words and Phrases is obscure and doubtful, because "the words whereof it consists are capable of different significations, and "consequently may be taken in a various sense: and thus it is with the Scripture, it is universally ambiguous, "and therefore obscure. *Exception.* 1.

To this I Answer, 1. If this Reason hold, then there is no Speech or Writing in the World, but will fall under the same unhappy fate. No Law of the Land, no letter of a Friend, no Oral Discourse, no Treatise of whatsoever Subject, and how accurately soever written, shall be accounted Intelligible. For all Writings and Discourses are made up of the same kind of Words and Phrases, and capable of being adorn'd with the same Tropes and Figures that the Scripture is, and *Sol.* 1.

every whit as liable to be taken in for different ſenſes. And thus no man ſhall know how to ſpeak or write any thing that can be clearly underſtood: and that excellent gift of *Speech* which God hath beſtowed upon men to be an inſtrument of ſociety and converſe, ſhall be of no other uſe, but to be made an Engine of deceit and treachery.

2. Secondly, if things be thus, to what end did this Author trouble himſelf to Write, and others to read this Book of his? if all Speeches and Writings be ambiguous and obſcure, and not to be underſtood without an Interpreter, of what uſe is this Jewel of his fancy? Did he hope to lead the whole World of Interpreters out of their Labyrinths into the right path, by ſuch an *ignis fatuus*, that by its ambiguities and uncertainties may ſcare and amuſe them, and carry them hither and thither according to the wind of their own imaginations? Or hath he attain'd to a faculty above all other Writers? even the beſt and holieſt to write in ſuch Words and Phraſes as might open his meaning

meaning, without entangling his Readers in ambiguities? If he thinks his Book be free from this blemish, methinks he might have had the modesty to conceive, that the Pen-men of Scripture knew how to write as well as he: If his thoughts of his Book were otherwise, he might have kept it to himself, and fed the Moths with it.

Thirdly, yet again, if it be thus, that all words in whatsoever contexture be so ambiguous and obscure, what will become of this Infallible Interpreter, which our Author would set up? For whatsoever Interpretation be made of any Scripture, it must be framed in such words as other men use, and as all kind of Writings are drawn up in; and if when all is done, these be obscure, what are we the better? For certainly according to this Authors argument, even the first Principles of Nature, and the most unquestionable Maxims of Philosophy, when turn'd into Words and Sentences, will be as ambiguous, and consequently as dark as the Scriptures. 3.

4. Fourthly, whereas his impeaching the Scriptures of Ambiguity and Obscurity, is not only to disable them from expounding themselves, but that he may set up *Philosophy* as the only Interpreter; he instances in several Scriptures, which he says are thus Ambiguous and Obscure; in the clearing whereof *Philosophy* cannot possibly afford us any help. As for Example, when he supposeth of our Saviour's Words in *Joh.* 5. 39. Ἐρευνᾶτε τὰς γραφάς, That it's doubtful whether this be to be taken *Imperatively*, search the Scripture: or *Indicatively*, ye do search the Scriptures. Can any Principle of *Philosophy* satisfie us whether the Verb ἐρευνᾶτε there used, be of the *Indicative mood*, or of the *Imparative*? So when he says it's doubtful, whether our Saviours words to *Peter*, *John*, 21. 16, 17, 18. should be taken *Interrogatively*, *Dost thou love me*? Or *Affirmatively*, *Thou dost love me*. And his words to his Disciples, *Math.* 26. 45. Whether they are to be read *Imperatively*, sleep on now, *&c.* Or *Interrogatively*, Do ye sleep on, *&c.*?

Ph. Ser. Int. c. 3. *par.* 24.

And

And so of *Pilat*'s words to our Saviour, *What is Truth?* Whether they are a *serious* question, or an *Irony*. In these and many other, if the matter and coherence do not resolve us, *Philosophy* cannot relieve us. How then do these Allegations serve our Authors end? which is that the Scripture cannot Interpret it self, but all its Interpretation must be regulated by *Philosophy*?

But Lastly, I deny this Charge laid against the Scripture, (of its being Universally Ambiguous, and Obscure) as highly contumelious to God the Author of it. For it supposeth, either that he could not, or that he would not speak his Mind to the Sons of Men; (for whose Eternal concerns he design ed this Sacred Volume,) in such a manner as they might understand it, and be bettered by it. As it was out of Love and Mercy to Sinners that the Scriptures were Endited, that they might have a sure Guide to Blessedness; so they are Written for all sorts and ranks of Men to make use of: and therefore they are for the most part drawn in a vulgar

condescending style. But if they cannot be understood without *Philosophy* (yea a very great insight into *Philosophy*, as this Author sometimes intimates) not one of a thousand of them that have the Scriptures, will be able to understand the Mind of God in them; they being (according to this Mans words) so totally dark and doubtful.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

A ſecond Exception, from the Exercitators unſatisfiedneſs about the meaning of our Divines, when they ſpeak of any Scriptures being perſpicuous in themſelves, removed.

"SEcondly, whereas it is uſually ſaid "by our Divines that ſuch places of Scripture as are clear and plain "in themſelves, do Interpret ſuch as "are obſcure; the great Queſtion is, "what do they mean by a place that "is clear and perſpicuous in or of it "ſelf? I have made inquiry about this, "(ſaith the Exercitator) and can "find nothing ſolid or ſatisfactory. *Except. 2.* *Phil. Scr. Int. c. 11. par. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.*

To this I anſwer in few words, That Place or Text of Scripture is plain and perſpicuous in it ſelf, whoſe ſence ſo fairly riſeth out of the Words, and their connexion with what goes before and after, that the Intelligent Reader need not miſs of it, if he be not wanting to himſelf *Sol.*

himself. And I appeal to any man that is not resolved to cavil, whether there be not thousands of Scripture-Sentences whose sense is thus clear and evident.

Object. "But here the Exercitator Replies, "The words whereof Scripture-Pro- "positions consist have their significati- Ibid. *par.* "on from Humane Institution, and their 3. 4. 5. "sense depends upon common use. If "therefore the sense of Scripture be "any where so plain as to be known by "the Words then it is not Scripture, but "*Usus Loquendi*, the common use of "Speech, that is the Rule of Interpre- "tation. But this, *says he*, is of all other "the most dangerous and deceitful Rule "to go by, causing many monstrous "conceptions of God and things Di- "vine, suitable to the apprehensions of "the Ignorant and besotted Vulgar.

Sol. 1. To this captious Objection I Answer Two things.

Phil. Scr. Int. c. 2. *par.* 7. 1. We are now speaking of such Scriptures whose sense is obvious, and so (according to the Exercitators own Rule given in the beginning of his Discourse) need no Interpreter. For he plainly sayes

sayes, (if at least there be any plain sayings to be found) that the proper Object of Interpretation is such a Speech as is obscure. This Cavil therefore is here is very disingenuous, being against his own premised Rule.

3. In Scripture there is somewhat common with other Writings, and something proper to it self, as each particular Writing hath. The words it useth are of the same kind with those of other Writings, and, singly taken, are supposed to have the like signification according to common use. But as those words are framed into Propositions in the Scripture, and those Propositions conjoyned in such a contexture of Discourse; so they may, and oft do, carry a peculiar Sense, which ariseth not from Humane Institution appointing the signification of such Words, but from Divine Ordination placeing those Words in such an Order, without which they would not signifie what they do. And though the several Words and Clauses of Scripture taken separately from the place wherein they stand, may have a dubious

dubious or indeterminate Senſe; yet take them together, with the whole diſcourſe to which they belong, and whereof they are parts, and the Senſe may be undeniably clear and determinate. And this is one way whereby Scripture expounds itſelf, as the other is, (what hath been moſt inſiſted on) by comparing dark places with thoſe that are plain.

Ph. Scr. Int. c. 11. *par.* 5. Take for inſtance one of thoſe nominated by the Exercitator; the words of our Saviour in *Matth.* 5. 34. *Swear not at all.* What it is *to ſwear* is I think well known, (though not ſeriouſly conſidered) by the moſt. And the Word ὅλως *at all*, what it ſignifies in common uſe we all know. And if this Clauſe were taken ſingly, it would ſeem to import an abſolute Prohibition of Swearing at any time, in any manner whatſoever. But take it as it here ſtands, as a branch of that whole diſcourſe, that begins at *Verſe* 33. and ends at *ver.* 37. And ſo Interpreters underſtand our Saviours meaning, either to forbid all Swearing by the Creature, and in familiar

miliar Diſcourſe: or to caution them againſt the common conceit and practice that then obtain'd, of Swearing raſhly and fallaciouſly by the Creature, upon ſuppoſal that ſuch oaths were not obliging becauſe the name of God was *not interpoſed.*

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

A Third Exception, that what is clear to one is obscure to another; where he denies all Perspicuity and Obscurity but what is Relative.

Except. 3. *Ph. Scr. Int. c.* 3. *par.* 3.

"BUT that which is plain to one "may be obscure to another, "saith the Exercitator; who there- "upon asserts, That there is no Perspi- "cuity, or Obscurity, but what is pure- "ly Relative to the Understanding of "the Reader or Hearer: and (accord- "ing to his wonted modesty) condemns the Reformed Divines, (and he might have added the Ancient Fathers) for affirming the Scriptures to be in themselves Perspicuous, though Obscure, in regard of the indisposition of Mens Minds.

Sol. 1. I Answer, 1. If there be no Objective Perspicuity, nor any thing clear in it self, but only as it relates to the actual exercise of Mens apprehensive Faculties; then it seems there is no difference between a clear day, and a cloudy, but only

only in reference to our ſight: and the Sun muſt not be ſaid to ſhine bright, becauſe Men that have loſt their Eyes, or are ſhut up in a Dungeon cannot ſee it. But I think the vanity of ſuch a conceit is Perſpicuous enough, whether the Exercitator ſee it or not. It hath been hitherto eſteem'd by all Men (as far as I know) a conſiderable excellency in any Writer, that his Speech and Stile is clear and perſpicuous; and the contrary, Darkneſs and Obſcurity hath been blamed in thoſe who affect to Speak or Write cloudily and enigmatically: which certainly implies, that there is a Perſpicuity, and a contrary Obſcurity, that is abſolutly inhering in the Speech it ſelf. And yet in the denial of this, *Wolzogen*, and his friend *Velthuſius* joyn with the Exercitator, aſſerting with him, that there is no Perſpicuity in the Scripture, but what is Relative to thoſe that Read or Hear it. And this they endeavour to confirm or illuſtrate by Similitudes. *A Speech*, ſays Wolzogen, *can no otherwiſe be cal'd Perſpicuous abſolutely in it ſelf, than a Mans Blood* *Li. 1. de Scr. Int. p. 104.*

Blood can be ſaid to be red while it runs in his Veins, and no Eye ſees it; or the Snow that falls in the extream North-parts, where no man feels the horror of it, can be accounted Cold. Theſe, (ſayes he) *do conſiſt in Senſe, without which, we cannot have any Conception of them. And ſo nothing is Perſpicuous further than it is perceived.* To the like purpoſe *Velthuſius* ſpeaks; *That Light is not in the Object, but in the Senſe; as heat is not in the Fire, nor cold in the Ice; but in the Senſe of him that Feels either the one or the other; no more than pain is in the Sword or Knife that makes a Wound. So* ſayes he, *neither is clearneſs in the Object that is to be known, but in the Mindes perception of it.* Truely, I do not much admire theſe Myſteries of the New Philoſophy. Hitherto both Light and Colour, Heat and Cold have been eſteem'd qualities inherent in their proper Subjects, and not to conſiſt in a Relation. But if it be as theſe Men ſay, it ſeems nothing is Cold or Hot, Light or Dark, ſave only *as* and *when* it is diſcern'd by one that ſees and feels it.

De uſu Rat. in Theolog. p. 15.

it. But on the contrary (to pass by other Arguments) we find in the History of the Creation, that *darkness was upon the face of the deep.* And when God said, *Let there be Light, there was Light.* Both which were, before there was any sensitive Creature in being to discern them. If any shall here say (as some are ready to do when clear Scripture goes cross to their darling Notions) that those words in the History of the Creation are used not according to the *reality of the thing*, but according to *Vulgar Conception*; I shall not think such profane boldness worthy a Reply. Perhaps it will be pleaded, that the Scriptures were not written to teach us Natural Philosophy. Be it so; neither were they penned to teach us any falshood, or to deceive us into mistakes concerning God or any of his Works. All the several parts of that Sacred Volume are so ordered, as to have some tendency, immediate or remote, to the great end for which it was Endited, the conducting of us to Happiness. But surely the God of Truth never designed to Gen. 1. 2, 3

bring us to Happiness by a Lie. Verily I have little encouragement to trust Mens Reason in matters of Revelation, when I find them talking so absurdly in matters of Natural Cognisance. And yet when all is done, *Wolzogen* grants, that the Scriptures are so framed, that nothing is wanting in them to render them perspicuous. And truely, as far as I understand, this is all that our Protestant Divines mean, when they say the Scriptures are perspicuous in themselves. What's the matter then? why he tells us their meaning is very good, but the Expression is incommodious, Which is but another taste of his Civility; this being his humour throughout his Book to nibble at somewhat or other in the most learned Writers of the Reformed Churches. But I return to our Exercitator. And,

Li. 1. de Scr. Int. p. 104, 105

2. Secondly, I answer, when the Apostle says, 2 *Pet.* 3. 16. that *some of those things* whereof St. *Paul* Treats in his Epistles, *are hard to be understood*, if there be no perspicuity or obscurity but what is Relative, he might as well have said

said that they are all hard to be understood; for doubtless there are some Men so stupidly ignorant, or obstinately perverse, that they understand none of them. But surely when the Apostle says, that some of them were difficult, he did not intend to say they were all so.

Thirdly, The Apostles preach'd the Gospel *in the demonstration of the Spirit and of Power*; and did by manifestation of the Truth *commend themselves to every Mans Conscience in the sight of God*: with such perspicuity and convincing evidence did they speak. And yet, as the same Apostle intimates, their *Gospel* might be and was *hid to them that were lost, in whom the God of this World had blinded the Minds of them which believe not, lest the Light of the glorious Gospel, which is the Image of God, should shine unto them.* There is therefore an absolute objective perspicuity in the Scriptures themselves, whatsoever may be the incapacity of Mens Understandings.

3. 1 Cor. 2. 4 — 2 Cor. 4. 2. — Ibid. v. 3, 4

4. *Ph. Scr. Int* c. 3. Lastly, to conclude this, I wonder at this Authors Wit or Memory, that he so grosly contradicts himself in this very Chapter, out of which this Exception is taken. For having premised, that the obscurity of Speech ariseth chiefly from its ambiguity, and at large discoursed of the several sorts of Amphibolies in Words and Sentences (all which do evidently prove, if any thing, an obscurity that lies in the Speech it self, without respect to the Reader or Hearer) he afterwards expressly tells us, that there is a two-fold ambiguity of Speech; the one absolute, considered in it self, and the other Relative, and with respect to us. *Cap. Cit. par.* 26. By which he unravels what he had said in his third Paragraph, acknowledging that a Speech may be ambiguous, and consequently obscure in it self. And if there be an absolute obscurity, there is also an absolute perspicuity; for which he before derided the Divines of the Reformation.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

1. *A fourth Exception against the Scriptures Perspicuity from the difference and contrariety between the simple sense of the words of* Scripture, *and the true sense of the Author.* 2. *The instances given to prove this consider'd.* e. g. *Such as speak of the Arme and Finger of God.* 3. *That in* Jo. 14. 16. 4. *Our Saviour's Words, This is my Body.* 5. *Those places where God is said to be Lord and King, and to have begotten a Son, and to love the World.* 6. *The aforesaid distinction condemned, and the Authors self-contradiction noted.*

IT is further Objected by the Exercitator, That the sense of Scripture is two-fold, either *sensus simpliciter dictus*, or *Verus*. And he thus Explains himself: "The sense of the Scripture "is either the simple sense of the Words, "which they of themselves offer to the "Reader; Sect. 1. *Except.* 4. *Pb. Scr. Int.* c. 3. *par.* 4.

"Reader; or the true ſenſe and mean-
"ing of the Author in thoſe Words.
"Theſe ſayes he, are ſeldom the ſame,
" but different, yea oppoſite: and
"the ſenſe which the words offer
" may be plain and eaſie, when the
" ſenſe that the Author intends by them,
" which is a clean other thing, is very
" dark and obſcure. And ſo confident
is the Gentleman in this conceit, that he
ſuperciliouſly ſlights Expoſitors of Scri-
Ibid. par. 7. pture for not minding this diſtinction,
and (for want hereof) taking oft times
the ſimple ſenſe for the true one.

To make this wild and ſenſeleſs diſtin-
on good, he inſtanceth in ſeveral paſ-
ſages of Scripture, wherein he would
make us believe this Two-fold ſenſe
is to be found. I ſhall therefore be-
fore I proceed, endeavour to clear
thoſe Paſſages, or the principal of them.

Sect. 2. *Sect.* 2. One inſtance he gives is of thoſe
1. *Ibid. par. 4.* expreſſions in Scripture, *The Arme and Finger of God.* "The ſimple ſenſe of
"which Words, and that which they
"do of themſelves offer to the Rea-
"der, he ſayes, is very obvious, being
"known

"known by common uſe: but he "thinks no Divine ſo void of Wit, as "to take that obvious ſenſe for the "true meaning of the Author.

By this it appears, this Gentleman conceives, that the ſenſe which thoſe Words of themſelves offer, is *proper* without any Trope or Figure; as if God had a bodily *Arme* or *Finger*, as a Man hath. But by his favour, he is greatly out. The *Arme* and *Finger* of God, according to common acceptation with any that are vers'd in the Scriptures, have no other than an *improper* ſenſe, nor do they ſignifie any more than the Power of God: though the word *Arme* or *Finger* either ſingly taken, or applyed to Men, ſignifies ſomewhat elſe; according to that known Maxime, *Verba ſunt intelligenda ſecundum ſubjectam materiam*, Words are to be underſtood according to the ſubject matter about which they are uſed. And this holds in all manner of Speeches and Writings whatſoever; the matter in hand directs to the ſenſe of the Words. *Sol.*

Sect. 3. 2. *Ibid. Sol.*

A second instance is in *Joh.* 14. 6. where our Saviour says, *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.* What obvious sense it is, that this Author conceives from common use of speech to be in these words, different from our Saviours meaning, I cannot divine: Nor can I see how they can signifie any more or less to him that is acquainted with the Doctrine of the Gospel, than what our Saviour means by them; who calls himself *The Way*, by no unapt Metaphor, because (as himself expounds it in the latter end of the Verse) it is by *Him* that Sinners are to come to the Father; that is, to Reconciliation with him, and fruition of him. It is *by Him*, that is, by the Merit of his Blood, by the Light of his Doctrine, by the Conduct of his Pattern, and by the Power of his Spirit. And herein he is *The Truth*, that is, the Substance and real Completion of all the Types and Shadows under the Law; and consequently he is *The Life*, (by a known Metonyme of the effect for the cause) in that he is the Author, that is, the Pur-

Purchaser and Bestower of that Eternal Life that Sinners come to enjoy in God.

A further instance is given in those words of our Saviour, *This is my Body*; where he affirms, "That the plain and "easie sense which the words of them-"selves offer to the Reader, is that "which the Romish Church takes them "in: but the sense of our Saviour in "speaking them, which he grants to be "that which the Reformed Churches "give of them, this, he says, is dark "and obscure. 3. Sect. 4. *Pb. Ser. Int. c. 3. par. 7.*

But I suppose he cannot be ignorant, that there are considerable Doctors of the Romish Church, eminent for Learning, who have acknowledged, that they should never have entertained that sense of the words which asserts Transubstantiation, if the Authority of the Church had not moved them. And our Writers have abundantly manifested the gross absurdity of that sense; and among others, Dr. *Brevint* in his late excellent Discourse of the *Mystery of the Romish Mass*, hath clearly, and *Sol.*

to

to great satisfaction, proved the Protestant sense of that speech of our Saviours from the very words themselves. I cannot well understand by this Authors discourse, of what setled Perswasion he is in matters of Religion. He now and then insinuates something that carries with it a dislike of the Romanists and their way: But it is plain enough by this, and many other passages in his Book, that the Reformed Churches are little befriended by him.

Ibid. 4. Sect. 5. Lastly, "He instances in those Scriptures where God is said to be Lord "of Heaven and Earth, the King of "Nations, and King of Kings; and "where he is said to have begotten a "Son, *Psal.* 2. and to have loved the "World, *Joh.* 3. 16. In all which, he "says, the obvious, but mistaken, sense, "and that which the Vulgar apprehend, is, that God, after the manner "of men, is a Lord and King, and "doth beget and love; which he "esteems to be grosly absurd. To these I answer distinctly.

1. As

1. As for the places where God is called *Lord and King*, and ſaid to *Reign over the Nations*, with all of like import; in theſe we are taught, by what we find elſewhere in Scripture, to remove from God whatever ſavours of imperfection, and to aſcribe nothing to him but what ſuits with a moſt excellent and moſt perfect Being. Nor do the aforeſaid Expreſſions, in their plain and obvious ſenſe, ſignifie either more or leſs, than that God is the Univerſal Sovereign of the World, Ruling his Creatures with infinite Wiſdom and Power, according to their different natures and conditions; the Inferiour ſort by inſtinct and natural neceſſity; his Intellectual Creatures by Laws, as the proper Inſtrument of Moral Government. And what the Exercitators ſentiments are about this, I cannot conjecture. If he be for that Novel Opinion of *Thomas Anglus ab Albis*, that God doth not properly Govern us by Laws, (as Kings do their Kingdoms) but, as an Engineer doth his Engine, by Phyſical Motion; and that therefore Sol. 1.

fore he is call'd our Lord and King only in a Metaphorical ſenſe; I muſt enter a diſſent againſt ſuch an abſurd and Atheiſtical conceit, and put him to prove his Aſſertion, and anſwer the Arguments that are in print againſt it.

2. As for the ſecond, *Of begetting a Son*, *Pſal* 2. 7. Interpreters do much differ about it. Some conceive the firſt and immediate ſenſe of the words to reſpect *David*, whom God had delivered out of his great afflictions, and rais'd to a Kingdom; which deliverance and exaltation was to him as a ſecond Birth. And this they illuſtrate by what is ſaid of the Roman Emperors, that they had two Birth-days; the one of their Perſons, when they came into the World; the other of their Empire, when they were ſeated in the Throne: and that Chriſt is here intended only as the Antitype prefigured by *David*. Others underſtand theſe words properly and immediately of Chriſt, and that with reſpect to one of theſe two; either, 1. To his Eternal Genera-

Generation, in reference to which he is called the Eternal and only begotten Son of God. The truth of which Generation we are upon Scripture-testimony to receive, without searching into the manner; it being a Mystery infinitely above our reach: which therefore he that will boldly intrude into, may justly fear to be overwhelm'd with its Glory. Or, 2. To the Temporal Manifestation of that Eternal Generation; a thing being then said to be done, when it is manifested to be done. And so the words are applied by the Apostle *Paul* to our Saviours Resurrection; whereby, as the same Apostle says elsewhere, *He was declared to be the Son of God with power.* Though I know there is, who understands those words of Christs Resurrection immediately and in it self; partly because it was, as it were, a second Birth to the Humane Nature; partly because it was, as they conceive, the beginning of his Installment into his Regal Office; which might be called his Birth by Analogy to what was said before concerning the

Act. 13. 33

Rom. 1. 4.

Roman

Roman Emperors. I shall not take upon me to determine, which of these ways of Explication is to be adhered to. But be it what it will, this I need not be afraid to say, that it is Scripture, if any thing, that must clear the difficulty, and decide the difference; it is not Philosophy in its highest Exaltation that can be a sufficient Rule to resolve us; the matter in hand being so wholly foreign to the best and clearest Natural Light.

8. 3. Then for the last instance, *Joh.* 3. 16. where *God is said to love the World*; though in this (as in all other things) we are not to measure God by our selves; yet this is undoubted, that by Gods love to Mankind, is every where plainly and clearly meant his *Will* to do them good, discovering it self in answerable effects, and the *Complacency* that he takes in the good that he doth for them, or works in them. Nor do I think that any man, who heedfully reads the Scriptures, can take it otherwise. And this is no way unbecoming the Divine Perfections, but fully

fully agreeing to his Nature, and the Manifestations that he hath made of himself both by Natural and Supernatural Light.

Now as to this distinction which the Exercitator so much applauds; condemning all others that are not as fond of it as himself; I find sufficient reason to reject it; and do affirm, that the Words and Sentences of Scripture taken in such a coherence among themselves, and connexion with the whole, (and otherwise than thus they have no sense that is properly theirs) do exhibit to the Reader no other sense than what is indeed the Authors meaning; being written for no other end but to signifie his mind for our safe guidance to Blessedness. And to think that they have any other sense than what is indeed the true mind and meaning of the Author, is to charge the Holy Scriptures with the vilest Imposture. What would we think of that man, that

§. 6.

Num Deus vocis & linguæ artifex dicarere fuco omnibus loquebatur.

sertè loqui non potest? Imò vero summa providentia voluit ea quæ divinà sunt, ut omnes intelligerent quæ ipse Lactant. l. 6. de vero cultu, c. 21.

should

should either speak or write so, as that his words should carry one meaning, and himself intend another? Would he not be judged a Deceiver? And shall we dare to fasten such a piece of Hypocrisie upon the Holy God, and that in a business wherein Mans Everlasting Happiness is concern'd? What thoughts have these men of God, who can talk thus of the Scriptures that are his acknowledged Word!

But let it be consider'd, before I leave this matter, whether our Author do not by this distinction contradict himself. For, 1. When he is (in preparation to his future discourse) explaining what he means by the material Object of Interpretation, he plainly asserts, that Words are first and immediately the signification of the inward Conceptions of the Mind; and because those Conceptions are representations of things in the Understanding, hence the Words that declare those

Ph. Scr. Int. c. 2. Par. 3. 4. *Vocabula (circa quæ Interpretatio versatur) ut habet Cic. in Top. sunt rerum notæ, aut potius, ut nos putamus, conceptuum.*

Primo enim iis utimur, ut quod mente concepimus, aliis notum faciamus; cumq; conceptus nil sint nisi rerum repræsentamina in Intellectu, iisdem secundo etiam illæ res denotantur atque designantur.

Con-

Conceptions, are used to signifie and denote things. Now if so, how comes it about that the Words of Scripture can have a different sense from what the Author intends, seeing (as the Exercitator acknowledgeth) they are signs or notes of the Conceptions of his Mind.

2. This same Author, when he is proving a multiplicity of true senses in the same Text of Scripture, and that whatsoever Interpretations, be they never so many and various, are given, if they be Truths in themselves, they are also the true Expositions of that place, useth this Argument, That else God would be chargeable with deceiving Men, by using such Words as he knew Men would be ready to take in such different senses, as he never meant. This the Author rejects with abhorrence, as not agreeing with the Divine Perfections. How well he agrees with himself, and how this may be reconciled with the forementioned conceit of such a twofold sense as we have been speaking of, the simple sense of

Phil. Ser. Int. c. 4. par. 8.

the Words of Scripture, and the true ſenſe of the Speaker, let the Reader judge.

CHAP. VIII.

1. *A fifth Exception, That the plaineſt Scriptures may be wreſted.* 2. *A ſixth, from the multiplicity of Commentaries and Expoſitions, removed.*

Sect. 1. *Except.* 5. "IN the next place, it will be ſaid "that the plaineſt Scriptures are "liable to be wreſted and perverted by "Men of corrupt minds: therefore "they are not perſpicuous enough to "Interpret themſelves.

Sol. Suppoſe what is indeed too true, (and ſufficiently made good by our Adverſaries in this cauſe) that the plaineſt Scriptures may be perverted. So may the beſt and trueſt Principles of Reaſon and Philoſophy. Nor can any Man deviſe how to ſpeak or write ſo, but a wicked and malicious Wit may put an abſurd or horrid ſenſe upon the moſt

most innocent Words. And of this, I think, we have instances enough every day. But what is this to the sense which the Words and Sentences of Scripture (in such a Contexture, and with reference to, and dependence upon the Antecedents and Consequents, and the whole Tenour of the Authors Discourse) do offer to the Reader? That the Scripture thus consider'd, is of it self liable to such ambiguous senses, is a profane and senseless calumny, bringing that Holy Volume under the same condemnation with the Devils Oracles, that were purposely contrived by that great Enemy of Mankind, to cheat and abuse the Pagan World.

But, may some say, do not many take the Words of Scripture in a far different sense from what the Author of Scripture intended? *Object.*

No doubt they do; what then? That is not, because the Words give them that sense, but because they impose that sense upon the Words, to make them comply with their own apprehensions. *Sol.*

Sect. 7. *Except.* 6. *Ph. Scr. Int.* c. 4. *par.* 1.

"In the sixth place, the Exercitator "argues against the perspicuity of the "Scriptures, from the multitude of "Commentaries, Animadversions, In"terpretations, (for he loves to heap "up words) written by Learned Men "upon the whole Scripture, or the se"veral parts of it: whence he con"cludes it as a thing unquestionable, "that the Scripture is obscure, so ob"scure that it cannot Interpret its own "sense.

Sol. I answer; That there are some difficulties in Scripture, that may exercise, yea, and exceed the ablest Wits, and that many things in it may be obscure to the Reader, for want of using the right means to understand, is confess'd. But the multitude of Expositions doth not at all prove the Scripture to be so obscure, as to be disabled for being the supreme Rule to Interpret it self. For whatsoever Notes or Commentaries are written upon the Bible by Learned Men, they are either such as truly conduce to the supposed End, the right understanding of the Scripture, and con-

consequently to the due practical improvement of what is so understood, or they fail of this, and do rather darken and cloud the Text. These of the latter sort do not deserve the Honour to be esteemed Interpretations of Scripture; for they render the sense of it more intricate and perplex. And truly it hath been no unusual thing for Men that write only to make ostentation of their Learning, and draw the eyes of others upon them, or to make trial of their Wits in their attempts upon the Scripture, to vent some odd Notions, that serve rather to amuse than edifie the Reader, and leave him more in the dark than when he perused the Text alone without their Gloss: as it hath fared with some voluminous Commentators upon *Aquinas*; who under pretence of expounding their Author, have run out into so many intricate and frivolous Questions, that by that time they have done, they have left the Authors Text less intelligible than it was before they medled with it: Truly so it is with some that have undertaken to

write upon the Holy Scriptures. But I take such Mens Writings rather for Depravations than Expositions. And the chief cause of this evil hath been (what this Exercitator is not well aware of) that they made too much use of their Philosophick Notions in their Endeavours to Interpret Scripture-Revelations. On the other hand, if Commentaries or Annotations on Scripture be such as do contribute any help towards the unfolding of the true sense, this hath been chiefly by collecting and comparing the several parts of Scripture together, and considering the circumstances of each Text expounded, and so fetching the sense of Scripture from the Scripture it self; which is the only sure and warrantable way of Interpretation.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

1. *The third and laſt Branch of my firſt Argument, the Scriptures Authentickneſs.* 2. *The Exercitators Exception removed.* 3. Wolzogen's *Exception, denying God to be the Interpreter of Scripture, anſwered.*

HAving vindicated the ſecond Branch of my firſt Argument, *viz.* The Scriptures Perſpicuity, from the many Exceptions made againſt it; I proceed to the third and laſt, *viz.* That the Scripture is the only Authentick Record of the Mind and Will of God. For it is the certain and undoubted Voice of God himſelf; and what *that* ſpeaks, *He* ſpeaks. And who ſo fit to Interpret the meaning of his Words as himſelf? *Ejus eſt Interpretari, cujus eſt condere*, is an approved Rule in the Civil Law; He that made the Law, is fitteſt to Interpret it. And in the preſent caſe the Reaſon is

Sect. 1.

Branch 3.

evident: God best knows his own Mind; and he hath no where so plainly and fully revealed his Mind as in Scripture. Certainly there can be none so sure and infallible Interpreter of these sacred Records, as the Holy Spirit that endited them; and he Interprets them, not by suggesting to us any thing for their understanding which is not there already; but by speaking to us more clearly from some part of Scripture, what is deliver'd more darkly in others. Can any Man, or sort of Men in the World, pretend to know the Mind of God better than himself? or give us better assurance what his Mind is, than the Word which himself hath appointed to be written for this very purpose? Whatsoever sense may be put upon any Scripture-Assertion, and by whomsoever framed, it cannot challenge our undoubted reception, unless we can discern the Voice of God in it. And that is no where to be heard with evidence and assurance, (especially in matters of Supernatural Revelation, which is that we chiefly deal with in this Con-

Controverſie) but from the Scripture it ſelf.

But here the Exercitator comes in with his Reply: "For acknowledging "that without controverſie God is an "Infallible Interpreter, and that the "Scripture is the Voice of God; he "nevertheleſs denies that therefore it "will follow that the Scripture can be "its own Interpreter, or the Rule of "Interpretation to it ſelf; becauſe, "ſays he, the ſame Author may write "ſeveral Treatiſes, and yet it follows "not that the one ſhould Interpret the "other. Sect. 2. *Except. 1. Pb. Scr. Int c. 13. reſp. ad arg. 9.*

To this I anſwer, The compariſon is very unequal. Men write of different Subjects many times, and for very different Ends; and may withal ſo far forget themſelves, or be ſo unconſtant to themſelves, as to croſs in one Diſcourſe what they have written in another. But God, the Author of Scripture, hath deſigned that whole Volume to one and the ſame Uſe and End, to be a Declaration of his Mind to Men, that they may thereby be directed in *Sol.*

their

their greateſt affairs, and have a ſure Guide to Happineſs. It is therefore every way moſt conſiſtent with his Wiſdom and Goodneſs ſo to order the enditing of Scripture in matters of ſo great excellency and neceſſity, that his Mind may be known from the Scriptures themſelves, either by the plainneſs of the particular Sentences, or by the dependence on, and connexion with, the Antecedents and Conſequents, or Collation with the more remote parts thereof.

Sect. 3. *Except. 2. Lud. Wolz. Li. 2. de Scr. Int. p. 202, 203 & p. 250.*

But there is another Author, who pretending to maintain the Proteſtant Cauſe againſt the Exercitator, deals leſs candidly with us than that profeſs'd Adverſary. For in ſtead of anſwering the aforeſaid Exception, he ſays again and again, "That God is not, nor can "properly be ſaid to be the Interpreter "of Scripture, or the Expoſitor of his "own Mind therein. And he gives us "this ſtrange reaſon for it: Becauſe to "this it's neceſſary that by an *Oracle* "(that is, I ſuppoſe, either by *audible* "*Voice*, or *ſecret inſtinct*) he ſhould "(accor-

"(according to the Enthuſiaſts fancy) "expreſly pronounce to us, that this "or that is the ſenſe of ſuch or ſuch a "Scripture. Unleſs he do this, he "cannot be allow'd by this Dictator to "be the Interpreter of the Scriptures.

To this I reply; Do we not all acknowledge that the Scripture is the Word of God, and that God ſpeaks to us in it, and that what that ſays, God ſays? And is it not the uſual Language of the Holy Ghoſt in the Bible, that the Scripture ſaith thus and thus? which ſure can be no otherwiſe taken for truth or ſenſe, but as the Scripture is the Voice of God to us. And *Wolzogen* himſelf ſays ſeveral times that in the Scripture God ſpeaks to us after the manner of men. And ſeeing ſometimes the Text is ſo plain that it ſpeaks clearly its own mind, and ſometimes what is ſpoken in one part of Scripture, is explained by what is ſpoken in another, (both which himſelf acknowledgeth) why may it not with as much propriety be ſaid, that God is the Interpreter of his own Mind in Scripture, though

Sol. Joh. 7. 38, 42. c. 19. 37. Rom. 4. 3. c. 11. 2. Gal. 3. 30.

Li. 1. *de Scr. Int.* p. 26.

though he use no other Voice than that of the Scripture in speaking to us? For how improper soever such an Expression may seem to this Gentleman, it is agreeable to Scripture-language. And me thinks he who so hotly contends for the *Usus loquendi*, as to make that the only supreme infallible Rule of expounding Scripture, might give our *Reform'd Divines* leave to speak according to this *Use*, without his supercilious censure. In the mean time this Author may do well to consider, whose Cause he most favours by such manner of arguing. I know none that can so heartily thank him for it as the Romanists, who use the same way of cavilling against us, when we say that the Scripture, or the Spirit of God in and by the Scripture, is the sole supreme Judge of all Controversies of Faith. This, say they, cannot be, unless the Spirit of God do, by an audible Voice, decide the Controversie, telling the one party they are in the right, and the other they are in an error. And because he doth not so in the Scripture, therefore they deny him to be

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the supreme Judge of Controversies by the Scripture. Thus *Gretser* the Jesuit in the Conference at *Ratisbon* Seventy five years ago: *Behold*, says he, *we are here disputing the Cause: If the Spirit of God do, by the Scriptures, judge and determine Controversies, let him now come, let him come and pass sentence out of this Book*, (the Bible that lay before him) *and say, Thou* Gretser *art wrong, and thou* H. *art in the right.* Now what doth *Wolzogen* by his Argumentation, but justifie the profane insolency of that petulant Jesuite? The Antients were of another mind; they acknowledged God speaking in the Scripture to be the Judge of Controversies. Thus speaks one of them to his Antagonist; *Nemo vobis credat, nemo nobis, de Cœlo quærendus, &c. Let none give credit to us or you; we must seek a Judge from Heaven: but what need we go thither to him, having his Testament here in the Gospel?* And if the Spirit of God may, with congruity enough, be said to speak in the Scriptures, as Judge of Controversies, he may with as

Ann. 1601. *V. J. Gerard. Exeg. Tom.* 1. *loc. com. c.* 22. *par.* 464. *& Dan. Chamier. Panstrat. To.* 1. *Li.* 1. *c.* 14.

Optat. Milev. li. 5. *cont. Parmen.*

as good congruity be acknowledged to ſpeak in the Scriptures, as Interpreting his own Mind there laid down.

And ſo I have done with my firſt Argument.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

A second Argument from the Scriptures being the only Rule of Faith, affording a double Proof for the Scriptures being its own Interpreter.

MY next Argument follows: That which is the only Rule of Faith, is the only Rule to interpret its own sense. But so is the Scripture. That the Written Word of God is the only Rule of Faith, is acknowledged by all that sincerely own the Protestant Cause. Now from hence I thus argue. 1. The supreme Rule of Faith is that which infallibly guides and determines us *per Modum Objecti*, what we are to believe. Now it is the Scripture in its true and genuine meaning that we are bound to believe. Whatsoever therefore objectively determines what we are to believe, must accordingly determine the sense of Scripture. And if any thing else besides the Scripture be the Rule to determine this, that must *eo ipso*, upon *Arg.* 2.

on that very ſcore, be acknowledged for the Rule of Faith. 2. Whatſoever is the Rule of Faith, muſt be the Rule of deciding all Controverſies of Faith: This I think no Man will queſtion. Now let but this be ſuppoſed, that the Scripture is the only ſupreme Rule of deciding all Controverſies of Faith, (which no ſound Proteſtant can deny) it will neceſſarily follow, That it muſt be the ſupreme Rule of clearing all Doubts and Difficulties within it ſelf. For where the Scripture is on both ſides own'd for the Rule, the knot of the Controverſie lies in this, whether this or that be the ſenſe of the Scriptures that are alledged on both ſides; for were that agreed, the Controverſie would ceaſe: and whatſoever determines that, decides the Cauſe. Thus much the Exercitator acknowledges. Whatever therefore it be that's made the Rule of Interpreting Scripture, and determining the ſenſe of it, is thereby made the Rule of deciding all Controverſies of Faith, and is to ſuch as ſo uſe it, the Rule of their Faith.

Ph. Scr. Int. c. 1. par. 1.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

1. *An Exception againſt this Argument, affirming Scripture and Reaſon jointly to be the Rule of Faith.* 2. *This Novelty diſproved and condemned.*

Sect. 1. *Except.* 1.

AGainſt this Argument ſome may have the confidence, it may be, to make this Exception, That Scripture is not the only Rule of Faith. The Papiſts join unwritten Traditions with the Scripture, and will have us take both together for the compleat Rule of Faith. This I ſhall not deal with, there having been ſo much ſaid by our Divines about it in the Controverſies between us and the Church of *Rome*. But there is another Generation of Men that join Human Reaſon with the Scripture, to make up the Rule of Faith. *Lambertus Velthuſius*, one of the Seniors of the *Gallo-Belgick* Church at *Utrech*, is charged with this by *Vander Weayen*, who cites this among many

Li. 1. adv. Wolzog. p. 114.

other erroneous Positions, out of one of that Authors *Belgick* Tracts, *That Scripture and Reason are the Rule of Faith.* So then we have here a new unwritten Word found out to be part of the Canon. So fertile of Monsters is this *Novaturient* Age. But, I hope, this Doctrine will not be so easily received as it is boldly obtruded.

Sect. 2. *Sol.* Hitherto Principles of Reason and Articles of Faith were wont to be contradistinguish'd: and though some things knowable by Natural Light, are likewise propounded to our belief in Scripture, yet such were never, that I know of, owned for Points of Faith, otherwise than as they were attested in Scripture. And in all Logick that I have been acquainted with, Arguments *à Testimonio* are put into one rank, and those that are drawn *à Natura rei* are put into another; these latter properly belonging to *Science*, the former to *Faith. Our Understandings* (saith [a] *C. Streso*, and after him [b] Dr. *Tailor*) *apprehend things three ways; The first is* Nous, *whereby it receives first Principles.*

[a] *Medit. de usu & ab. rat. in reb. Theol.*
[b] *Deut. Dub. li. 1. c. 2.*

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The second Διαθησις, *whereby it draws Consequences from those Principles. The third is* Πιστις, *of such things as we assent to from Testimony.* And it is a known speech of St. *Austin*, *Quod intelligimus, debemus rationi, quod credimus Autoritati: That we understand, we owe to Reason; but that we believe, we owe to Authority.* And we have hitherto taken it to be essential to a Christians Faith, that in its Assent it rely upon the Infallible Veracity of the Revealer, as the *ratio formalis credendi.* *De util. cred.*

Perhaps it will here be said, (for I cannot imagine what else can be said) "That the Principles of Reason are the "Word of God, and by him written in "our Minds; therefore our Assent to "them is a belief of Divine Testimony, "as well as our Assent to what is writ-"ten in the Bible: and consequently "they are part of the Rule of Faith." *Object.*

What can be the meaning of this, that these Principles are written in our Minds, I cannot understand any further than this, that there is begotten in our Minds a clear perception and *Sol.*

firm perſwaſion of them. But the great Queſtion will be, By what Act doth God write theſe in our Minds, or beget in us this perception and perſwaſion of them? Surely, they will not ſay, that when God creates the Soul of Man, this perception or perſwaſion of theſe Principles is concreated by him in and with the Soul: for if ſo, how is it that during our Infant-ſtate we are ſuch ſtrangers to them, and do ſo continue, till we come gradually by obſervation and experience to be acquainted with them? And when we come to diſcern them, and to be perſwaded of them, how come we to be aſſured that they are of God? There muſt be ſome difference between the *Teſtimony* and the *Thing teſtified*. The Principles of Reaſon are ſuppoſed to be the *Res teſtata*, the Thing teſtified. But what is the Teſtimony, or the *Actus Teſtificandi?* My perception or perſwaſion cannot be it: for if ſo, then whatſoever I perceive and am fully perſwaded of, I muſt believe to come from God: and what will that come to at laſt? Theſe Principles

ciples of Reason are not *Complex Propositions* form'd by God in our Minds, or suggested to us by a Divine *Afflatus*: this would make every Man an Enthusiast. The best account I can give of them is, that they are such *General Truths*, as have their foundation in the nature of things, and their mutual habitudes and respects; which our Reason apprehending, doth therein discover the aforesaid Principles thence resulting. And because it is God alone, who gives to all things their several Beings, and constitutes them in such and such habitudes each to other, and hath given us our Reason, whereby we are enabled to discern them; therefore he is said to be the Author of those Principles, which lie fundamentally in his Workmanship. And we do not take them for Truths upon the credit of any foregoing testimony that God gives to us of them: but we assent to them *propter evidentiam rei*, because our Reason sees them perfectly agreeable to the nature of things; and thereby finding them to be certainly true, thence it

gathers that they are of God, from whom all Truth comes. But now the method of Faith is widely different from this: Here we first own the testimony of God speaking in the Scriptures, and thence we are perswaded that what the Scripture speaks is true, and so we come to embrace the many severals therein asserted, by yielding a particular assent to them as we find them.

Object. "But, will some say, before we believe the Scriptures, we must be convinced by Reason that these Scriptures are of God.

Sol. Very true; but the effect of such a conviction is not properly Faith, but Knowledge. And when I know by satisfying Grounds of Reason, that the Scripture is indeed the Voice of God, then do I by Faith assent to what that speaks as Gods testimony. And whereas there are some Truths, which are knowable in some measure by Natural Light, and yet are revealed likewise in the Scripture; it is commonly and truly said by our Divines, that as they are

received

received by Natural Light, and upon Rational Grounds, so they are the Objects of Science: but as they are revealed in the Scripture, so, and only so, they are the Objects of Faith: which (as the Apostle tells us) *is the evidence of things not seen*, that is, of things not discernable by Natural Light, whether of Sense or Reason; or at least that are not consider'd as such, when we receive them as Objects of Faith; which therefore is call'd the evidence of them, because it discerns the truth and reality of them in the infallible testimony of the Revealer. Heb. 11.1.

Now besides what hath been already said, it may further be proved that Reason is not any part of the Rule of Faith. For

1. Were this granted, it would necessarily follow, that Scripture of it self is an imperfect Rule, and if so, it is no Rule at all. That cannot be own'd for a Rule that is not *adequate* and *commensurate* to what is to be regulated by it. The known description of a Rule given by *Varinus*, and so 1.

frequently quoted by our beſt Authors, hath never, that I know of, been queſtioned: Κανὼν ἐστι νόμος ἀπαράβατος καὶ μέτρον ἀδιάψευστον, πᾶσαν πρόσθεσιν καὶ ἀφαίρεσιν μηδαμῶς ἐπιδεχόμενον. *A Rule or Canon is an immutable Law, and an unerring Meaſure, which at no hand will admit of addition or diminution.* This is one great Argument uſed by our Proteſtant Writers, to ſhut out Popiſh Traditions from being any part of the Rule of Faith, becauſe the Scripture is a perfect and ſufficient Rule of it ſelf, and muſt be ſo, or elſe it cannot be a Rule at all. Of which the Reader may ſee enough for his ſatisfaction in the Learned Biſhop of *Down* his *Ductor Dubitantium, Lib. 2. Cap. 3. Rule* 14. *p.* 359, *&c.* And the Argument is every whit as good to exclude Reaſon as Tradition in this caſe. And that the Scripture is a perfect diſcovery of the Mind of God, (ſo far as is neceſſary for us to know it) I have proved before in my firſt Argument.

F. 2. The Principles of Reaſon (as I have formerly ſhewed in the proof of my

my firſt Propoſition) have no formal exiſtence any where but in the Minds or Writings of fallible Men, conſidering them as ſeparate from the Scriptures: for ſet the Bible aſide, there is no Infallible and Authentick Record of thoſe Principles, to which we can have recourſe. And this utterly diſables them for being ſo much as a partial Rule of a Chriſtians Faith.

3. Principles of Natural Reaſon, (let us ſuppoſe them never ſo fixt and infallible) are wholly aliene to matters of ſupernatural Revelation, which are the proper Object of Faith. And to meaſure theſe by them, were as ridiculous as to attempt by a Carpenters Rule to take the diſtance of the Heavens, or to ſpread a Fowlers Net to catch the Winds. However therefore there is (as hath been already acknowledged and maintain'd) great uſe of Reaſon and its Principles in ſubordination and inſtrumental ſubſerviency to the knowledge of Divine Matters, yet that it is in any degree to be owned as the Rule of our Faith, muſt not, will not, 3.

not, cannot be allowed by any that are true to the Christian Cause.

CHAP. XII.

An Exception of the Exercitator, grounded upon a distinction of the Scriptures taken materially or formally, propounded, and the folly and fallacy of it detected.

Except. 2, Ph. Scr. Int. c. 13 par. 1. & c. 16. par. 9.

BUt here the Exercitator gives us a distinction, which he makes often use of, as being very fit for his turn, "That the Scripture is taken either "*materially*, and so it signifies no more "but the bare Words, Phrases and Sen- "tences of Scripture: or *formally*, and "so it signifies the sense and meaning "of these Words and Sentences. Now, "says he, when we say the Scripture is "the Rule of Faith, we do not mean "the bare words, but the sense; and "that is the thing we inquire into by "the help of Philosophy; and when "we have thereby obtain'd the sense "of

" of Scripture-Propositions, that sense " we own for the Rule of our Faith, " and of deciding Controversies in Re- " ligion. But (adds he) when the " Reformed Doctors say, the Scripture " is its own Interpreter, they can mean " only the Words and Sentences of " Scripture without the sense: for it is " the sense that they are seeking for, " and that cannot be the Rule to find " out it self.

To this I answer: 1. The distinction of the Scripture consider'd *materially* and *formally*, or in respect of the *matter* and *form*, is generally received: But was never, that I know of, taken in the sense of this Author, but in a far different meaning; *viz.* The Scripture, as to the *matter*, is the Word of God; and *formally* consider'd is the same Word as written. But this Gentlemans Exposition of it serves his turn very well; *viz.* That the Words and Phrases of Scripture are as rude matter, till the sense (as the form) be given it by Philosophy, or Humane Reason. *Sol.* 1.

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But,

2. But, 2. The distinction, as here used, is a miserable subterfuge, arguing some Wit, but no Honesty. For when we say, the Scripture is the Rule of Faith, and it is the Rule of Interpretation to it self; in both we mean neither the words, nor the sense *separately*, but *conjointly*. For, 1. The Scriptures are no otherwise the Rule of our Faith, than as they are the Revelation of the Mind of God to us. Now the Words or Sentences separated from the true sense, (supposing they could be so separated) are not the Mind of God: and the sense separated from the Words and Sentences, (if it might be so separated) would be no Revelation: for we know not the Mind of God but by the Words; and his Mind as clothed with these Words, or these Words as exhibiting his Mind, so they are our Rule.

Again, 2. When we say the Scripture is a Rule of Interpretation to it self, we mean that if the place under consideration be plain, it delivers its own sense to the Reader that well minds the

the contexture and dependence; if it be dark, we have recourse to some other plain Scripture, and by the evident sense of that, wherein the Mind of God lies more clearly in the words, we find out his Mind in that other, where it lay more darkly.

The fallacy of this Author in charging us to mean only the Words of Scripture, when we say the Scripture is its own Interpreter, lies in this, he would make the World believe that we mean it of one and the same Sentence of Scripture, even where it is most obscure. Now, as himself premiseth, *Phil. Ser. Int. c. 2. par. 7.* that Interpretation supposes some obscurity in the thing to be Interpreted; so he could not but know, that in the case of obscurity, we mean it of the Scripture according to its different parts; that the Scripture where it is plain is a Rule of Exposition to it self in those parts that are more intricate, (which himself also acknowledgeth to be our meaning elsewhere in his Book.) And yet we use no such incongruity as he supposeth, in saying the *Ib. c. 11. par. 1.*

the Scripture expounds it ſelf, each part of Scripture being Scripture; no more than in ſaying that the Civil or Municipal Law expounds it ſelf, when one part of the Law explains another.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

1. *An Anſwer to ſome other Objections againſt the Scripture being its own Interpreter:* e. g. *That Proteſtants aſſert a neceſſity of the Spirits Illumination.* 2. *What Correſpondency hath one part of Scripture with another?* &c. 3. *Some difficult places of Scripture are not explained elſewhere.* 4. *Many Rules of Interpreting Scripture are preſcribed by Divines both Ancient and Modern.*

I Shall now conſider what may be further Objected againſt my preſent Aſſertion, beſides what I have already met with in clearing my foregoing Arguments. Sect. 1.

And firſt, the Exercitator Objects, *Object. 1. Ph. Scr. Int. c. 10. par. 2.*
"That the Divines of the Reformed
"Churches maintain a neceſſity of the
"Spirits Internal Illumination for our
"right underſtanding of the Scripture:
"therefore the Scripture is not a ſuffi-
"cient Interpreter of it ſelf.

I

Sol. I answer; What the Spirits enlightening is, and how far necessary, may be more seasonably discuss'd in another place, and therefore I intend to speak something to it in an Appendix to this Discourse. But at the present we are to consider, that the Spirit is said to make known to us the Mind of God two ways: 1. *Objectively*, as it speaks to us in the Scripture, which is of the Holy Spirits enditing. 2. *Effectively*, as it acts in us to help our weak understandings. Now these two are widely different one from the other. The former notes the *Objective Evidence* that is given us of Gods Mind, which is by the Scripture: and this is enough to render the Scripture a sufficient Rule of Interpretation to it self, whether the other were necessary or no; becaufe there is in the Scripture a sufficiency in the nature of an *Objective Light* to discover the Will of God; the latter concerns only the *Subjective Light* which the Spirit affords to our dark understandings, that we may discern what is in the Scripture; the necessity

ceſſity whereof doth not at all impeach the ſufficiency of the former; becauſe that which makes this latter neceſſary, is not any *obſcurity* in the *Object*, but an *indiſpoſition* in the *Subject* or Faculty that is to apprehend it.

But it's further objected, "What "correſpondency hath one part of Scri- "pture with another? or what right "or power hath one Pen-man of Scri- "pture over the Writings of another, "that the words of the one ſhould be "Interpreted by the others? Thus ar- gues the Exercitator. Sect. 2. *Object.* 2. *Ph. Scr. Int.* c. 11. *par.* 2.

To which I anſwer: 1. May we not with much more reaſon ſay, What correſpondency hath Philoſophy with Scripture? Have not the ſeveral parts of Scripture, all which were endited by one and the ſame Infallible Spirit, more correſpondency one with another, than any of them can have with Philoſophy, which is the immediate product of fallible Reaſon? *Sol.* 1.

2. The Author may do well to conſider what good correſpondency there is between the ſeveral parts of his own 2.

Book, and whether this Objection do not evidence him to be inconsistent with himself. For in his third Chapter, when he would prove that the words in 1 *Kings* 3. 12. concerning the Wisdom of *Solomon*, are to be understood by an Hebrew Idiotism, and mean no more than that the Wisdom given to *Solomon* was very eminent, and above the ordinary rate; he appeals to two other places that speak of the Piety of *Hezekiah* and *Josiah*, and says, *Hoc ita se habere, ex duobus aliis ejusdem Scriptoris locis non obscure elucescit, &c. That it is so, appears plainly by two other places of the same Writer, viz.* 2 *Kings* 18. 5, 6. *and* C. 23. 25. Which he says, can no otherwise be truly understood but in this sense, that their Piety was eminent and extraordinary. It seems our Author was *then* in the mind that one part of Scripture may have correspondency with another, and this so far as that the one may expound the other. But now the case is alter'd. If it be replied in his behalf, That these places by him quoted, were

Phil. Scr. Int. c. 3. par. 21.

were penned by one and the same Writer, and therefore might well have correspondency each with other; but this makes nothing for those who interpret one part of Scripture by some other that was not written by the same Hand: I rejoin, That the first and second Book of Kings were endited by the same Spirit, I grant, and shall make some use of it in my third Answer to this Authors Objection: But that they were both written by the same Hand, or (suppose they were) that the Writer intended by the latter to explain what he had written in the former, is more than he, or any other for him, can prove.

3. The Scriptures, though written by parts, and at several times, and by several persons, yet they all own God for their Author, by whose Spirit they were endited; and they are all together to be taken for his Counsel to Sinners. And then what injury or incongruity is there in making use of what one hath written more plainly, to unfold what was more darkly writ-

ten by another? When we compare the Evangeliſts together, to explain what one ſays more briefly, by what another lays down more fully; we do not in this ſo much inquire into the ſenſe and meaning of the Evangeliſts, as into the Mind of God whoſe Secretaries they were. The like may be ſaid of the Prophets: If the Prophets or Apoſtles ſpake of their own heads, or wrote only a ſignification of their own private Sentiments, there might be ſome colour for this Objection. But the Apoſtle tells us, That *no Propheſie of Scripture is of private Interpretation*: that is, [a] the Prophets in their Writings were not the Interpreters of their own Mind, but of the Mind of God by whom they were ſent, and by whoſe Spirit they were acted; as it follows in the next Verſe, *For Propheſie came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God ſpake, as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt*: And thus much the Exercitator acknowledgeth, where he ſaith, That *God is the Author of the Scriptures, and that he did always guide his Ama-*

2 Pet. 1. 20, 21.

a *This ſenſe is given by Learned* Camero, Rivet, Dr. Pearſon *on the Creed, and I take it for the moſt genuine. Ph. Scr. Int. c. 4. par. 5.*

Amanuenses to write the Truth, giving them the assistance of his unerring Spirit; and that whatsoever they wrote, is pure Truth, free from all mixture of Falshood or Errour.

But there is another Discourse prefixed to a latter Edition of the so oft-mentioned Exercitation, (and thought by many to come from the same Author) the Writer whereof sticks not to assert this audacious Falshood, *That the Prophets in their Narratives, and in all matters of Speculation*, (that is, whatsoever was not matter of moral Duty) *did disagree among themselves; and consequently that what is said by one, is not to be explained by the words of another.* Which (with other passages of like import) does at once call in question the whole Truth, and consequently the Divine Authority of the Scriptures. For if the Penmen of Scripture clash one against another, in their Writings, either God was not the Author of what they wrote, but themselves, or the God of Truth must be charged with Falshood; for of two dissentient Opini-

Tractatus Theologico-Polit. cap. 7.

ons both cannot be true. Whose design it is that the Author of that Theologico-Political Tractat drives, except that of the great Enemy of Mankind, I know not: But he sufficiently manifests a vile esteem of the Holy Scriptures, and a desire to beget the like in others: For he takes very earnest pains, with the utmost of his art and skill, to make up and exagitate their seeming disagreements, as real contradictions, casting a great deal of scorn upon all Expositors, as Fools or Madmen, that attempt to reconcile them. His discourse in this and sundry other odious passages, which I abhor to mention, doth apparently tend to promote the cause of the Antiscripturists, besides the help it affords (which is not a little) to the Romish Interest. The Author indeed would seem, by some Expressions here and there, to intimate his dislike of the Pontifician Party. But we know it is consistent enough with the Politick Principles of Men of that way, to speak much more than he hath done, against that very Cause that they are studiously

V. Tract. cit. c. 9. 10.

ously projecting, under that Covert, to advance.

But I return, from this Digression, to what I was about. If any thing in the Laws of a Kingdom be difficult and perplex, and there be something in some other Law of the same Kingdom, (though written or printed by other hands) that speaks more clearly of that matter; what wrong is it to the Law, or the Law-maker, or Printer, if a Learned Council, comparing one with another, expound that which is more dark in one part of the Laws, by that which is more perspicuous in another, both proceeding from the same Authority, and both obliging to the same persons? Judge alike in the present case. This Objection therefore is of no force.

But it is further urged, "That there "are some difficult places of Scripture, "that are no where explained in any "other part; and some things that be- "ing but once spoken in Scripture, "cannot be explained by any parallel "place. And here our Exercitator re- Sect. 3. *Object.* 3. *Pb. Scr. Int.* c. 1. *par.* 7.

fers us for inſtances, to his great Friend *Stapleton.*

Sol. 1. For anſwer, 1. Whereas it is ſaid, there are difficulties in ſome parts of Scripture, that are no where cleared; how does any Man know this? Doth it follow that there is no ſuch thing becauſe we cannot find it? Do we think our ſelves of ſo piercing or capacious underſtandings, that nothing in the Scripture that is intelligible, can eſcape our diſcovery? Thoſe who have acquainted themſelves with Antient and Modern Expoſitors, do know that many difficulties which former Interpreters have in vain ſtruggled with, and ſome that they have wholly left untoucht, (either as not apprehending them to be difficulties, or conceiving them inſuperable) have been made very clear and plain by ſome later Writers. Verily, God will have us know, that the opening of his Mind doth not depend only or chiefly upon the pregnancy of Mans Wit, but upon his gracious aſſiſtance and bleſſing, which he affords or withholds when and where himſelf ſees fit. Again,

Again, the Scriptures were penn'd not only for the past and present, but for all succeeding Ages of the Church to the end of the World: And as some parts of them, which peculiarly concern'd some Ages past, were perhaps better understood in those Ages than they can be by us now (as certainly many things were that belong'd to the Jewish Oeconomy) so I know not but we may rationally suppose, that some other parts of Scripture, which to us seem unintelligible, may have special reference to the Church in after-Ages, and that those whom they so nearly concern, shall have more light afforded for the understanding of them in their days, than we have in ours: As without doubt some Prophetick Scriptures not yet accomplished will be made clear by the event, when they come to be fulfilled. 2.

If there be any difficulties in any one part of Scripture, which cannot be clear'd from some other by the best inquiry we can make, it will be a vain thing to attempt the finding of it out any 3.

any other way: but we must be, in such cases, content to be ignorant of their meaning. Nor yet will those Scriptures be utterly useless or in vain to us, if from their obscurity we can learn this needful Lesson, the more reverently to adore the Majesty of the written Word, and more humbly to acknowledge our own ignorance and weakness. And to this may be referr'd what is objected about the ἄπαξ λεγόμενα, where the sense is not obvious.

Sect. 4. *Object.* 4. *Ph. Scr. Int. c.* 11. *par.* 8.

Yet again it is objected; "If the "Scripture be its own sufficient Inter- "preter, what mean those many Rules "that Divines give for the right under- "standing of Scripture? If the Scrip- "ture it self be the only Rule, what "need is there of all these? Thus the Exercitator, who makes a particular enumeration of several Rules that are given by St. *Austin* and others.

To this childish Cavil (which the Author brings in by the by) I answer; Whatsoever Rules are given by Divines for the right Interpretation of Scripture, (such as are sound and good) are only

only to direct the Reader how with moſt eaſe and greateſt certainty to fetch the ſenſe of Scripture from the Scripture it ſelf. Thoſe Rules therefore being but *ſubordinate* and *miniſterial*, do no way contradict or overthrow this which is the *Supreme* and *Autocratorical*. Suppoſe a Maſter-workman having a Building to frame, imploy ſome under him, who are as yet raw and unskilful, till they have gotten ſome inſight into the Carpenters or Maſons Art; when he ſhews them (as they muſt have a learning) how to uſe the Square, or the Rule, or the Plumb-line; ſurely his direction that he gives them doth not at all argue the uſeleſſneſs or inſufficiency of thoſe Inſtruments for the purpoſe to which they are deſigned; but rather the contrary: ſo is it in the preſent caſe; thoſe inferiour and ſubſervient Rules that are preſcribed by any for the expounding of Scripture, are deſigned and directed (if they be ſuch as they ſhould be) to teach Men how to make uſe of the Supreme Rule, the Scripture it ſelf, for the better finding out of the Mind of God in it. Ha-

Having confirm'd my Propoſition, vindicated my Arguments for it, and anſwer'd the Objections againſt it, it is time for me to draw to a Concluſion. As for the Exercitator, with whom I have moſtly dealt in this Controverſie, when I weigh his Arguments, I cannot but wonder at his confidence. But he who hath no better Weapons, muſt fight with a Bull-ruſh. And it is now become the mode of Polemick Writers that have *Prurient Wits*, to ſharpen their dull Arguments with high confidence in themſelves, and a proud contempt of their Antagoniſts: in both which this Author excels; but it is ſuch an excellency, for which no Wiſe or ſober Man will envy him.

THE

THE Conclusion.

THE Author whom I have chiefly and designedly dealt with hitherto, having engaged himself in a Contest with the whole World of Christian Writers, especially with the Expositors of Scripture, and having, in his own apprehension, won the day, comes in his Epilogue to make preparation for his Triumph, bringing forth his Spoils, and telling us how greatly he hath bless'd the World with his Exploits; and lest we should be ignorant of our Happiness acquir'd by his Victorious Arms, he sets it out in six considerable Points.

1. He tells us, *This new way of Interpretation being sure and infallible, will, if*

if it be taken, forthwith baniſh all Diſputes about the ſenſe of Scriptures, and thereby reſtore Peace to the Chriſtian World. But I wonder how this ſhould be effected by Philoſophy, which is it ſelf ſo full of Diſputes, and the Profeſſors whereof are at ſuch variance among themſelves. Let them firſt reconcile their own Differences, before they undertake ſo great an Enterpriſe elſewhere.

2. *It will be a great eaſe to the Interpreter; becauſe whatever ſenſe he can make of any part of Scripture, if Philoſophy allow it for a Truth, he may be ſure it is the ſenſe of that Text; this way allowing a plurality of immediate ſenſes in the ſame Scripture, and where it is thus, it is eaſier* (ſays he) *to find the true meaning, than where* (*according to the Proteſtants opinion*) *the ſenſe is but one.* And yet ſure, when we ſpeak of inquiring after the ſenſe of Scripture, we mean the whole ſenſe, not part of it only. And if many ſenſes may be more eaſily found out than one, then perhaps our Author may find it an eaſier thing

to

to gain a thousand Proselytes than one to his new way.

3. *This will save Men the labour of searching Commentators; because in this way they may, by their own industry, find out the Mind of God, without any help from others.* And so they may, according to his Principles, without ever looking into the Bible at all.

4. *By this way we may best find out all Corruptions, Depravations, and Mutilations of the Original Text, whether Hebrew or Greek.* And is it not pity the Antient Church did not think of this happy Expedient, that they might have call'd a Council of Learned Philosophers (such as *Porphyrie*, *Celsus*, and others) to draw them up a more correct Copy of the Bible?

5. & 6. *By this we may know how to judge of all various Lections, which are Genuine, which not; yea, by this we may discover the Errours of Translations made out of depraved Copies, or Spurious Readings, though we have no skill at all in the Original Tongues.* Doubtless a singular Receipt, that will help a Man

to

to distinguish of Colours in the darkest Mid-night as well as at Noon-day. We see what a rare *Pampharmacon* this *Æsculapius* hath prescribed, (which he may well call his *Nostrum*) that can work as great Wonders as the Headsman's Ax, that infallibly cures all Diseases with one Blow. For that his grand design is utterly to cashier the Scripture as useless and unprofitable, is plain enough by sundry passages in his *Book*; but especially that in his Epilogue, which I lightly touched at in the first part of my Discourse, Chap. 6. but deserves a more severe Castigation. The Scripture with him is of no use to instruct us in any thing we know not, nor yet to confirm us in what we know. All the use he allows it is only this, that by reading therein we may be occasion'd and excited to consider of the things there treated of, and examine the truth of them by Philosophy: And as much as this might be said of the Jews *Talmud*, or the Turks *Alcoran*. Was there ever any who call'd himself a Christian, since the Christian Name was heard of, that

that hath manifested a more vile esteem of Gods Written Word, or a more bold contempt of the whole Christian Doctrine? Hath God in mercy left us this only Authentick Record of his Mind to conduct us in our way to Blessedness? and is this all it is good for? It seems by this Mans account all the Knowledge that we have any use for, is in us already by Natures Light, and whatsoever is delivered in Scripture, must be tryed by that. What could a blind Pagan have said more to the Scriptures dishonour?

As it is past all doubt that the Lord of Heaven and Earth, in whom we live, and move, and are, ought to be worshipp'd and served by his Rational Creatures; so me thinks it should be as unquestionable that he cannot be served rightly and acceptably, but by such a Worship as is according to the appointment of his own Will. The meanest Man living, that hath any depending on him, looks they should serve him according to his Mind, and not according to their own arbitrary

choice. And shall we think the Great Sovereign of the World will be pleased with a Worship of Mens own framing, without any order or direction from him? Now by which way or means could we know what that Worship is which God approves, if we were in this lapsed state, left to the meer conduct of Natural Light, and had not Divine Revelation to inform and guide us? What pitiful Work did the wisest and learnedst of the Heathen make about this? and what horrid Impieties did they admit into their Religious Worship? as I have already touched in the first part of my Discourse.

Besides, there are in Scripture many things Historical, and many Prophetical: Can these be known by Natural Light? or can we judge whether these be true or no by the help of Philosophy? *Moses* gives us the History of the Creation, of the general Deluge, of the Destruction of *Sodom*, of *Israels* Deliverance out of *Egypt* by strange Wonders; and the bringing of them (after forty years wandring) into the

Promised

Promiſed Land, and their Eſtabliſhment there for ſome years, till for their Idolatry and other ſins they were removed, is recorded by other ſacred Writers: beſides many other remarkable Hiſtories of more perſonal concernment. Now if we muſt not take theſe for truth from the teſtimony of Scripture, which way ſhall we be ſatisfied? Reaſon indeed may convince us that theſe things are not impoſſible: But whether they were really ſo or ſo done as is reported, all the Principles of Reaſon, all the Maxims of Philoſophy will never reſolve us. The like may be ſaid of the many Propheſies concerning Chriſt, and the after-ſtate of the Church, and about the four great Monarchies that were ſucceſſively to ariſe, with their progreſs and period: If theſe and ſuch like be examined by Philoſophy, what can it ſay to them? Muſt theſe be all rejected? So it ſeems by this Author's Diſcourſe: for he hath no kindneſs for any thing in Scripture, but what may mind us of what we know naturally, and may by the Principles

of Reason be examin'd and determin'd. And then what shall we say to the great Doctrine of Mans Salvation by Christ, which is the grand Subject and principal Scope the of Scriptures? Was there ever any syllable of this made known to the World otherwise than by Revelation? There is indeed a Natural Theologie; but I could never yet see ground to be perswaded that there is a Natural Christianity. The knowledge of God as our Creator and Preserver, is in some measure (but very imperfectly) attainable by Natural Light: But the knowledge of Christ as the Redeemer of Sinners, reconciling them to God, and delivering them from the power of Satan, had never been attained, had there not been something above Nature to discover it. If any think otherwise, let them tell me how it comes about that in those Countries where the Doctrine of the Scriptures was never published, there is not the least print or footstep of this great Mystery to be found. But certainly he that talks of the Scriptures after the

rate

rate of this Author, cannot be thought to apprehend himself to stand in any need of a Redeemer; or to have any better esteem of the Gospel, than that Triple-Crowned Gentleman at *Rome* *Leo 10.* is said to have manifested long since in his discourse with Cardinal *Bembus*.

For ought I see, this Man owns nothing in the Scripture but what may be reduced to three Heads; 1. The Being of God, and his Attributes; 2. The Immortality of the Soul, and consequently Mans future state in another World; and, 3. The Rules or Laws of Moral Duty: because of these we have some notice by Natural Light. But how miserably defective is that Light even in these? So that here also we stand in need of a further Guide. Some knowledge the Heathens had of God, and of Mans future state: but, alas, what does all that they have written hereabout come to, but some faint guesses, and probable conjectures? And though they have in their Ethicks many excellent things, and of great use; yet they fall extream short in sundry

particulars of very weighty concernment, whereof we ſhould have been utterly ignorant, if the Holy Scriptures had not afforded us a more clear and perfect Rule of practice. And it hath been obſerved by ſome, that thoſe Gentile Philoſophers, who flouriſh'd after the general promulgation of the Goſpel, though they continued ſtill in their old Gentiliſm, yet they wrote much more clearly and ſublimely of the Nature of God, and of Mans Duty here, and his Eternal ſtate hereafter, than thoſe who were before them. Whether the cauſe of this were the converſe they might have with Chriſtians and their Writings, or whether that plentiful effuſion of the Spirit that was vouchſafed in thoſe times might in ſome degree (as to common enlightenings) extend it ſelf beyond the Churches Pale, I will not determine. But ſure ſomething there was beyond mere Natural Light, that made them, in their Notions of God and Religion, ſo much exceed the beſt of their Predeceſſors.

I shall shut up all with this hearty and serious Wish, That all who call upon God by Jesus Christ, would highly honour and esteem the Holy Scriptures, making them their study and delight in order to the bettering of their Hearts, and manifesting the power and purity of this Word by a sober, righteous, and godly Conversation: which would more effectually vindicate this Blessed Book from the Scorns and Reproaches of Atheists and Antiscripturists than all Disputes.

AN

APPENDIX

Concerning Internal

Illumination,

And other Operations of the Spirit upon the Soul of Man.

Vindicating the Doctrine of the Protestants and the Practice of all Serious Christians from the Charge of Enthusiasm, and other Unjust Criminations.

In the *SAVOY:*

Printed by *Tho. Newcomb*, for *Robert Boulter*, at the Turks Head in *Cornhill*, over against the Royal Exchange. 1677.

APPENDIX

Concerning Internal

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A brief Account of the Contents of the following Appendix.

CHAP. I.

THe Proteſtants Doctrine concerning the Spirits Illumination, explained and defended.

CHAP. II.

The Nature of Diſtreſſes of Conſcience and Spiritual Joys open'd, and the reality of them proved.

CHAP. III.

True Zeal in the Exerciſes of Religion juſtified.

AN

An Appendix concerning Internal Illumination, and other Operations of the Spirit upon the Soul of Man, &c.

CHAP. I.

1. *What our Protestant Divines mean by that Illumination of the Spirit, which they assert as necessary to the understanding of the Scriptures: and the Excercitators censure of it as Enthusiasm, approved by* Wolzogen. 2. *The Falshood of that Calumny discovered.* 3. Wolzogen's *disingenuity and inconstancy.* 4. *The necessity of the aforesaid Illumination proved.* 5. *In what sense it is supernatural.* 6. *Some of the Excercitators Cavils answered.* 7. *In what sense this Illumination is immediate.*

In

Sect. 1. IN the foregoing Papers (designed to clear and vindicate the Protestant Doctrine concerning the Supreme Rule of Interpreting Scripture) I have had occasion frequently to deal with the *Belgick* Exercitator, and to take notice of what he hath said that seems to be of any moment, so far as concerns that point. But whereas he is pleased in the procedure of his Discourse to step out of his way, and deridingly to oppose the Doctrine of the Reformed Churches about the Spirits assistance in the Interpretation of Scripture, as favouring of Enthusiasm; I then waved medling with that part of his Book; thinking it more expedient to say something to it in an Appendix by it self, this being a Question altogether distinct from that other of the Rule of Interpretation.

In the Fourteenth Chapter of his oft-mentioned Exercitation, he quotes several of our Protestant Authors of great Name and Worth, giving us the words

words of some of them, and referring us for others to the cited places. The drift of their several Discourses about this point seems to be, that there needs an effectual operation of the Holy Spirit, to enlighten Mens understandings, and cause them rightly to apprehend, and readily to approve the Mind of God in Scripture. That their meaning may be more clearly propounded, we must distinguish of a twofold understanding of Scripture. There is a Natural and merely Grammatical perception of the truth of Scripture-Propositions, which a Man, destitute of the Spirit of Grace, may attain by common assistance in the use of ordinary means. And there is a Spiritual apprehension of the things themselves contain'd in those Propositions, (which includes in it a hearty believing and embracing them) that is not attain'd without the sanctifying work of the Spirit, renewing the mind by enduing it with an heavenly, supernatural Light. This I find thus expres'd and illustrated by the late Reverend Bishop of *Norwich*:

Natural

Treat. of the Sinfulness of Sin, p. 119.

Natural Men, says he, *have their Principles vitiated, their Faculties bound, that they cannot understand spiritual things, till God have as it were implanted a new understanding in them, framed the heart to attend, and set it at liberty to see the Glory of God with open face. Though the Veil do not keep out Grammatical Construction, yet it blindeth the Heart against the spiritual Light and Beauty of the Word. We see even in common Sciences, where the Conclusions are suitable to our innate and implanted Notions, yet he that can distinctly construe and make Grammar of a Principle in* Euclide, *may be ignorant of the Mathematical sense and use of it: Much more may a Man in Divine Truths be spiritually ignorant even where in some respect he may be said to know. For the Scriptures pronounce Men ignorant of those things which they see and know. In Divine Doctrine Obedience is the Ground of Knowledge, and Holiness the best Qualification to understand the Scriptures.* To this Spiritual Understanding there is need of the aforesaid Supernatural Light.

Light. And this is that which (as far as I can understand) our Divines mean, when they assert the necessity of the Spirits Illumination. Thus speaks the Church of *England*, [a] *The Revelation of the Holy Ghost inspireth the true meaning of the Scripture into us: In truth we cannot without it, attain true saving knowledge.* Yea, of this mind was *Erasmus* (no Enthusiast) who thus speaks; [b] *He erreth vehemently, who believes he can ever attain to the true understanding of the Canonical Scriptures, unless he be inspired by the same Spirit that endited them.* And again; [c] *They have the Book of Scripture, but not the Scripture, that want the Spirit; without which the Scripture is not understood.* And M. *Luther* [d] quoting a Speech of *Aben-Ezra*, *Sine supra & infra*, (*i. e.* without Points and Accents) the Scripture cannot be understood; adds a third, *sine intra*, without somewhat *within*, *viz.* the Light of the Holy Spirit.

Now let us hear the Judgment of the Exercitator, and his pretended Answerer *Wolzogen* about this: As for the

a 2 *Homily of the Scripture.*

b *De rat. conc. li. 1. Errat vehementer, qui credit se consequi posse veram Canonicarum Scripturarum intelligentiam, nisi afflatus eo Spiritu quo proditæ sunt.*

c *Ib. li. 2.*

d *Luther on Gen. 47. cited by Gerard in Exeg. loc. com. de S. Script. c. 15. par. 336.*

former; "If, says he, the meaning of
Ph. Scr. Int. c. 14. par. 1. "these Divines were this, that no sense
"of Scripture, by what way or method
"soever found out, can be fully certain
"to any, unless by the Natural Light
"of our understanding we can clearly
"and distinctly perceive it, and be ful-
"ly perswaded of its truth, and that
"this clear perception, and the sense a
"Man hath of it, be that inward per-
"swasion and testimony of the Spirit
"which they intend; this will be grant-
"ed them: But if they mean not the
"Natural Light of Mans understand-
"ing, or what is built upon that, but
"a Supernatural Light, above and be-
Ib. par. 3. "yond Mans Natural Reason, not in-
"cluded in the Mind, or acquired by
"it, but infused and inspired from a-
"bove; this, says he, we disclaim and
"condemn for Enthusiasm. This is the
sum of the censure that he passeth upon
this Doctrine. And *Lud. Wolzogen*,
who pretends to take up the Bucklers
against him in defence of the Protestant
Cause, in stead of vindicating the fore-
cited Authors and their Doctrine,
joins

joins with the Exercitator in the calumny; as appears undeniably by his own words; for thus he ſpeaks; *Because the Holy Spirit doth indeed ſtill exert ſome power in the minds of Men, therefore ſome have believed that he opens the ſenſe of the Scriptures, and interprets them to the Faithful. Which opinion the Exercitator doth juſtly decry, and determine that it contains mere Enthuſiaſm.* Where he expreſly approves and applauds what the Exercitator had ſaid againſt the Doctors of the Reformed Churches, charging them with Enthuſiaſm for maintaining a neceſſity of a Supernatural Light for a ſaving perception of the Mind of God in Scripture. And himſelf doth ſo frequently ſtrike upon this ſtring in ſeveral places of his Book, that he ſeems to deſign the blemiſhing and defaming of our moſt eminent Proteſtant Writers, and the Doctrine which they have aſſerted againſt Papiſts and Pelagians. *Lib. de Scr. Int.* p. 125, 126.

Theſe Men cannot be ignorant, that the Divines whom they thus impeach, have all along, in anſwer to the like Sect. 2.

imputation from Popiſh and Socinian Authors, expreſly and vehemently diſclaimed all compliance with Enthuſiaſts, and that ſome of them have written learnedly and ſmartly againſt that ſort of Men. They utterly diſavow their expecting any ſuch Illumination, as was given to the Prophets and Apoſtles; and do plainly deliver their minds, that what they aſſert, doth not conſiſt in diſcovering any new Doctrine unreveal'd in Scripture, but in qualifying and diſpoſing the mind for a right underſtanding and receiving that which the Scripture propounds: For they ſuppoſe (what the Scripture plainly affirms, and what none ever denied but *Pelagius* and his followers) that the mind of Man by the *Fall* is blind in the things of God, that it cannot rightly and ſufficiently, unto ſalvation, diſcern the things of the Spirit, when preſented to it, unleſs that inward blindneſs be removed: That the Scripture propounds to us the Truths we are to receive; but the Spirit diſpoſeth us to receive them; which the Reverend

rend Biſhop of *Cheſter* thus expreſſeth: *The ſame Spirit which revealeth the Object of Faith generally to the Univerſal Church*, (viz. by the H. Scripture, which was given by the motion and operation of the Spirit of God, as he had ſaid a few lines before) *doth alſo illuminate the underſtanding of ſuch as believe, that they may receive the Truth: For Faith is the Gift of God, not only in the Object, but alſo in the Act.* And a little after, concluding his Diſcourſe on this Head, he ſaith; *Thus we affirm not only the Revelation of the Will of God, but alſo the Illumination of the Soul of Man, to be part of the Office of the Holy Spirit of God, againſt the old and new Pelagians.* That *Subjective* Light whereby the mind of Man is enabled to ſee Divine Truths, this all ſound Proteſtants own to come from the Spirit of God, immediately irradiating the mind, and curing that ſpiritual darkneſs that poſſeſſeth it, whereby it is indiſpoſed for underſtanding ſpiritual things in a ſpiritual manner: but all the *Objective* Light or evidence that we have of the

Dr. Pearſon *on the Creed*, p. 327.

Ib. p. 328.

Mind of God, they acknowledge to lie in the Scripture it self. And therefore our Learned *Whitaker*, in his Conteſt with the Romiſh Doctors, makes this clear and candid profeſſion in the name of all the Proteſtants: *Internas Perſuaſiones ſine externo Verbo tanquam Satanæ ludibria cavemus. Ex Scripturis Sapimus, cum Scripturis Sentimus, propter Scripturas Credimus.* "We ſhun Inter-"nal Perſwaſions without the External "Word, as the Deluſions of Satan. We "fetch our Wiſdom from the Scriptures, "we regulate our Sentiments by the "Scriptures, we build our Faith upon "the Scriptures.

Whitak. *Op. in fol. Tom. 2.*

Sect. 3. But *Wolzogen*, as he deals moſt diſingenuouſly with our Proteſtant Divines in reporting their Doctrine, inſerting ſomewhat of his own that quite changes its meaning, and ſo rendring it more obnoxious to cenſure; ſo he is very variable and uncertain in delivering his own mind. And yet in the winding up ſays as much as all that comes to, which he, together with the Exercitator, calls Enthuſiaſm. For he tells

tells us, That *the Spirit corrects that corruption of the mind which hinders us from discerning the sense of Scripture.*— And,— *That he exerts his power about the constitution of our minds,* (which he had acknowledged before to be cover'd with the darkness of a natural ignorance) *by enlightening them.* But then he says, *This is not by putting any new light into our minds, for all that shines in the Scripture.* Where he strangely confounds the *Objective* and *Subjective* Light, as if they were all one. Sure, it is not enough for a Mans seeing of visible Objects, that there be an External Light in the Air, but there must be an Internal Light in the Eye; and if this be lost, (as it is in the blind) it must be restored, or the Man will never see, though there were never so much Light about him. Yet after all, the aforesaid Author tells us elsewhere, That *the Spirit of God so powerfully and efficaciously affects our minds by enlightening, exciting, moving, leading them, that the darkness of our natural ignorance being dissipated, we may savingly perceive*

Lud. Wolzog. de Script. Int. P. 64, 65. P. 253. P. 13. *Censura censuræ,* 144.

the Divine Objects presented to us in the
Ib. p. 266. *Scripture.* And again, ——— he says, *The Eye of the mind being vitiated, the Holy Spirit restores its sight.* And yet
Ib. p. 280. more, *I grant*, says he, *that in this business the Spirit of God imprints a new light upon our minds, if by this be meant that he gives us as it were a new faculty of receiving that Light that shines in the Scripture, not any new Light*, (i. e. not any new Objective Light) *distinct from the Scriptures.* Now truly this (for any thing I can see) is that very Doctrine of our Reform'd Divines, which the Exercitator had so boldly charged with Enthusiasm, and that with this Authors approbation.

Sect. 4. But I perceive there are some Men, (whereof the Exercitator is one) who make account that all the darkness Men are in, even as to matters Spiritual, is only a want of such a Light as shall discover the Object, without curing the Faculty. Thus *Schlichtingius* writing against *Meisnerus* in defence of *Socinus*, says, *Homo intellectu præditus in divinis mysteriis ita cæcus est, quemadmodum is*

qui

qui oculos quidem habet, ſed in tenebris ſedet: amove tenebras, & lumen affer, videbit. Oculi hominum ſunt intellectus, lux eſt Chriſti doctrina. Man endued with underſtanding is no otherwiſe blind in Divine Myſteries, than as he who hath eyes, but ſits in the dark: remove the darkneſs, and bring him a light, and he will ſee. The eyes of a man are his underſtanding, the light is Chriſts doctrine. To this purpoſe ſpeaks the Author of a late Pamphlet, that *when once the myſtery of Chriſt Jeſus was revealed, even Humane Reaſon was able to behold and confeſs it; not that Grace had alter'd the eye-ſight of Reaſon, but that it had drawn the Object nearer to it.* But that defect of the mind of Man which the Scripture ſpeaks of, is evidently an internal darkneſs; not only a darkneſs about him, but a darkneſs within him; which the greateſt external light, without ſomething elſe, will never redreſs; no more than the bringing of a light into a dark room, can make a blind Man ſee. And if it were not thus, I ſee no reaſon why Man ſhould be counted any more

Treatiſe of Hum. Reaſon, p. 58.

more blind or ignorant in reference to matters of Heaven and Eternity, than in reference to Arts and Sciences, and common Trades, which he is wholly at a loss in, till the Principles of them be clearly and distinctly propounded to him. But lamentable experience makes it abundantly manifest, that Men of quick understanding and greatest proficiency in these matters, yet remain as blind as Beetles in Divine Mysteries, notwithstanding all outward means of Instruction. The Apostle *Paul* was train'd up in the Doctrine of the Law at the feet of *Gamaliel*, and very strict he was in the righteousness of the Law, according to the understanding that he had of it. And yet being destitute of the Spirit of Grace, he tells us, that he was all that while *without the Law*; Rom. 7. 9. because he was destitute of the true spiritual knowledge of it. That *Disciplinary* knowledge that he had from his Teachers, was not sufficient, because he wanted the inward light of the Spirit to cure his blindness, and remove his prejudices. This the Apostle *John* calls,

calls, *Giving us an understanding that we may know him that is true.* And this was promised of old, when the Lord says by his Prophet, *I will put my Law into their inward parts, and write it in their hearts*; which, besides an external Revelation, implies necessarily an internal Illumination. Most true it is, that as the light of the body is the eye, so the light of the Soul is Reason: but if (as our Saviour says) this light which is in us be darkness, *how great is that darkness?* And that it is so with this internal eye, as to matters Heavenly, till the Spirit of Grace enlighten it, is evident by Scripture and all experience.

1 Jo. 5. 20.

Jer. 31. 33

Mat. 6. 23.

Ephes. 5. 8.

Sect. 5.

But as far as I can understand, there are two things in the present point that are especially quarrell'd at: *viz.* That the Spirits enlightening of our minds is affirm'd to be *Supernatural*, and to be *Immediate*. I shall say something to them both.

First, Some are angry at our Divines for maintaining such a thing as *Supernatural*

natural Illumination. The [a] Exercitator rejects all *Supernatural Light* as a Figment. And [b] *Velthuſius* (for whoſe Orthodoxy *Wolzogen*'s credit lies at ſtake [c]) denies the diſtinction of Natural and Supernatural Light, and affirms peremptorily, that our knowledge of whatſoever Object, whether natural or reveal'd, is attained by one and the ſame Internal Light, and that with him is no other than the natural light of reaſon. Now if his meaning were no more but this, that whatſoever Objects are preſented to us, Natural or Supernatural, they are all perceived by the ſame natural faculty of Reaſon or Underſtanding; I know no Man ſo abſurd as to deny it. But if he means (as he muſt if he mean any thing) that our Reaſon or Underſtanding apprehends all Objects of what kind ſoever, by no other inward light but what is connatural to it, needing no ſupernatural light to help it; he muſt pardon us, if we prefer the Authority of Scripture, and the Judgment of the Catholick Church before his Novel Conceits. Surely, when

[a] *Pb. Scr. Int. c. 5. par. 6. & c. 14. par. 3*

[b] *De uſu ration. in Theol.* p. 8, 9, 10.

[c] *In Epiſt. ad Academiæ Franckeranæ Senatum, Anno 1667.*

when *David* pray'd for the opening of his eyes to see the wonders of God's Law, and when St. *Paul* pray'd that the *Ephesians* might have the eyes of their minds enlightened, they did not conceive that by the Spirits enlightening no more was meant than the natural light of Mans Reason: for they knew, that themselves, and those they pray'd for, had that already, as they were Rational Creatures; and therefore there was no more need to pray for that, than to pray that God would make them *Men*. Ps. 119.18 Eph. 1.17, 18.

But for the further clearing of this, the word *Supernatural* may have respect either, 1. to Mans nature as *finite*, and so far *innocently imperfect*; or, 2. to Mans nature *depraved*, and so *sinfully defective*. If we consider Man in his first state, though his actual knowledge was short of what by further experience he might have attain'd; and at the best, had its bounds from the finiteness of his being; yet I doubt not, but he had sufficient light connatural to his understanding for the perception of

of the higheſt Myſteries, whenſoever they ſhould have been propounded to him with clear *Objective* evidence. But it is not ſo with Man fallen. The light of Mans natural underſtanding is now ſo weak and dim, that there needs a new *ſupervenient* light, raiſing and quickening the mind to a greater perſpicacity than lapſed Nature hath, or can of it ſelf attain to for the right underſtanding of ſpiritual things, how plainly ſoever propounded. And in this ſenſe we own and aſſert the ſaving light of the Spirit to be ſupernatural, in that it elevates the underſtanding to ſuch a power or ability of knowing heavenly Myſteries, as Nature in its lapſed ſtate hath not of it ſelf, nor can recover by its own greateſt induſtry without the ſpecial Grace of God *. It is an acknowledged truth, that every thing is received according to the capacity and fitneſs of the Recipient. To a right underſtanding of any thing, there is required a ſuitableneſs between the Faculty and the Object. The eye cannot perceive ſmells, nor the ear hear colours,

* *Dicimus habere ſingulos fideles ſupernaturale lumen, quod per verbi miniſterium Spiritus illorum mentibus infundit; in quo lumine ipſi judicant, & propriæ mentis oculis percipiunt dogmata illa, quibus aſſentiuntur actu Fidei Catholicæ, eſſe divina.* Davenantius de Judice & norma controv. cap. 30.

colours. Nor can any ſenſitive power reach to the apprehenſion of things purely intellectual: ſo neither can the mind of a mere natural Man that is darken'd and depraved by ſin, (while it ſo remains) duly apprehend matters ſpiritual and heavenly. It is the Obſervation of a late Author, that *the beſt and moſt effectual remedy for the thorow curing of our Intellectual diſeaſes, is that which alters the Craſis and diſpoſition of the mind*; *becauſe* (as he very well argues) *'tis ſuitableneſs to that, which makes the way to Mens Judgments, and ſettles them in their perſwaſion: there being few* (as he further adds) *that hold their Opinions by Arguments and dry reaſonings; but by congruity to the underſtanding, and conſequently by reliſh in the affections.* Now as ſound Philoſophy doth (according to the aforeſaid Author) go far for the cure of Mens miſtakes, *by giving their minds another tincture*; to wit, in ſuch things as lie within the ſphere of Nature; ſo where this comes ſhort, (as in things of ſupernatural Revelation it certainly doth)

Mr. Glanvil *in his Philoſophia Pia*, P. 45.

doth) there is need of supernatural aid. This Mr. *Baxter* hath very well expresst; *I think*, says he, *that in the very hearing or reading, Gods Spirit often so concurreth, as that the Will it self shall be touched with an internal gust or savour of the goodness contained in the Doctrine, and at the same time the understanding with an internal irradiation, which breeds such a sudden apprehension of the verity of it, as Nature gives Men of Natural Principles. And I am perswaded that this increased by more experience and love and inward gusts, doth hold most Christians faster to Christ than naked reasoning could do: And were it not for this, unlearned, ignorant persons were still in danger of Apostasie by every subtile Caviller that assaults them. And I believe that all true Christians have this kind of internal knowledge from the suitableness of the truth and goodness of the Gospel to their new quickened illuminated sanctified Souls.* The Apostle tells us, *God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of*

Animadversions on the Lord Herberts *Book De Veritate*, P. 135, &c.

Modus Sciendi in dogmatibus fidei est per inspirationem, per testimonium Spiritus, & per modum gustus; ut verissimè Halensis, Part. 1. q. 1. art. 2. Sic Daven. de Judice & norma controv. c. 30.

2 Cor. 4. 6.

of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Where he manifestly compares the great Work of God in enlightening the dark heart of Man with spiritual knowledge, to the first forming of Light, which was the Act of a Creating Power, when Darkness cover'd the face of the Deep. Let the greatest External or Objective Light be afforded, if there be not likewise, in order to the reception of that, a Subjective Light infused, it will prove, as we find in *Joh.* 1. 5. *The Light shineth in Darkness, and the Darkness comprehended it not.* Gen. 1. 2, 3

Two passages in the Exercitator I shall here take notice of. The one is, where he says, "That the opinion of "our Divines concerning this Supernatural Light, seems to him to have had "its Original from the received Axiom "of the Aristotelick Philosophers, *That* "*nothing is in the Understanding that* "*hath not been first in the sense.* Which, "says he, the Divines receiving for an "undoubted truth, did never call off "their minds from their senses; and "finding the knowledge drawn from Sect. 6. *Ph. Scr. Int. c. 5. par. 6. Object. 1.*

"thence to be very lame and imper-
"fect, and next to nothing, they judg-
"ed all rational knowledge to be no
"better: yet happening by chance
"ſometimes to make uſe of their mere
"underſtanding in the perception of
"ſome things, and thereby attaining
"ſome true and ſolid knowledge,
"which they found to be of a far other
"nature than that which they uſed to
"fetch from the ſenſes, therefore they
"took this latter kind of knowledge to
"be ſomething Divine and Superna-
"tural.

Sol. 1. To this I anſwer, 1. By what Power or Authority doth this confident Gentleman break Windows into the breaſts of others, and take upon him to know the ſecret thoughts and inward conceptions of their minds? Did they ever tell him, that this was their apprehenſion of things? or that their Doctrine of Supernatural Light was built upon the Authority of *Ariſtotle*, or deduced from any of his Axioms? Or doth his *New Philoſophy* furniſh him with skill ſufficient to ſearch the hearts of

of Men touching their particular Sentiments, as he pretends it doth to ſhew him the mind of God in Scripture-Revelations? I think it furniſheth him for both alike: But I wiſh it had taught him better to know himſelf.

2. Neither were *Ariſtotle* nor his Followers ſuch Dolts or Blockheads in maintaining the forementioned Axiom, as to take it in that abſurd meaning, *that nothing could be received into the Underſtanding, but what is the Object of Senſe:* For they clearly maintain the knowledge of thoſe things that fall not under ſenſe; as of God, and Angels, and of Univerſals that are abſtracted from ſenſe. But that all our knowledge of things without us, comes in by the Senſes, eſpecially by thoſe two that are not unfitly called the Senſes of Diſcipline, *Sight* and *Hearing*, is, I think, evident enough by all Experience, beſides what we find in Scripture concerning the knowledge we have of God; which is either Natural, or by Revelation. Now as for the former, the Apoſtle ſure was not deceived by

Ariſtotle's Axiom, when he tells us,
Rom. 1. 20 That *the inviſible things of God from the Creation of the World, are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his Eternal Power and Godhead.* And for the knowledge of things revealed, we are taught by the
Rom. 10. 17. ſame Apoſtle, that *Faith cometh by hearing.* And our Saviour's moſt uſual method of Preaching by Parables, may ſhew us how requiſite it is for Man in this ſtate to have his underſtanding inform'd even in things Spiritual and Heavenly, by the help of ſenſe and ſenſible Objects.

Object. 2. Th. Scr. Int. c. 14. par. 3. The other paſſage is that where he ſays, "That this Supernatural Light is "a thing unintelligible, he knows not "what to make of it, nor how to con-"ceive of it: Is it (ſays he) ſomething "ordinary, or is it extraordinary?

Sol. 1. To his Demand I anſwer, It is beyond the reach of corrupted and depraved Nature, and ſo it is extraordinary: but it is the inſeparable priviledge of renew'd Nature, and ſo far it is ordinary, for it is communicated to

to all who partake in the saving Grace of Christ.

But, 2. Whereas this Author says, He knows not what this enlightening of the Spirit is, I easily believe him, considering what our Saviour says of the Spirit of Truth, which he promised to his Disciples; *That the World could not receive him, because it seeth him not, neither receiveth him.* And it is no wonder for Men to speak slightingly or contemptuously of the things they know not: Upon which very account many excellent Truths plainly revealed in the Gospel, are, by audacious Wits, exploded and derided as unintelligible Mysteries. 2. Jo. 14. 17.

Yet, 3. Me thinks Mens Reason might tell them, (if it were not wofully blinded by pride, prejudice, or passion) that the unaccountableness of the nature of a thing, or of the manner how it is, can be no sufficient Argument against its existence. The most perspicacious Inquirers into the Secrets of Nature, do acknowledge themselves convinced of the certain existence of 3.

many things, the nature whereof, and the manner of their production, they are not able to conceive, much less to discover. *Thou knowest not* (says Solomon) *what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the Bones do grow in the Womb of her that is with Child.* It is beyond the *ken* of Mans understanding infallibly to know, or demonstratively to prove, 1. The way of the Spirit or Soul, whether it be produced by Creation, or Traduction, or what other way. And, 2. How the Body is form'd in the Womb. I know some learned Men have gone far in their Discoveries, but the ablest of them have been put to a stop, meeting with some knots which they could not untie. I might ask these *Curious Questionists*, How they can solve the many Doubts that may be raised about the *Species* of sensible Objects, and about the *Phantasms* in the Mind; or give us a satisfying account, whence they come, how they are framed, and where it is that they are first received? Or, I might demand of them, Which way the Soul and

Eccles. 11. 5.

and Body are united to each other, and how they come to act one upon another, with a thousand more difficulties that occur, where the πῶς is unsearchable, though the ὅτι be undeniable. How much more may this be affirm'd of things purely revealed, the sublimity whereof so vastly exceeds the former?

Secondly, Another thing these Men dislike is, That the Spirits enlightening of the Mind is said to be *Immediate*. Sect. 7.

1. Now if the word Immediate be taken as it is sometimes explain'd, for such as *supersedes* Man's use of God's appointed means, as if he were to expect some internal voice or impulse to reveal to him the Mind of God; we disclaim all *Immediate* Actings of the Spirit in this sense. But if *Immediate* be taken (as it may very properly) for such an operation of the Holy Spirit as doth *Immediatè attingere mentem*; that by it self, without the interposition of any second cause, reacheth the mind of Man; so we maintain, that there is no effectual operation of the Spirit of God 1.

upon the Soul of Man, but what is in this ſenſe *Immediate*. For what created Agent is there to come between the Spirit of God and the Soul of Man? or that can by its own efficiency come at the Soul of Man to work upon it? This nothing can do but an Infinite Spirit. If any will ſay, That there is ſomething elſe comes between the Spirit of God and the Soul of Man, in this buſineſs, let them aſſign what it is. Is it the Scripture it ſelf? That can act but *Objectively*; nor can it do that, further than it is *underſtood* and *believed*. That therefore which works upon the Mind by a proper efficiency to redreſs the indiſpoſition of the Faculty, and to enable it to know and believe, muſt be ſomething elſe; and that can be no leſs than the Spirit of Wiſdom and Revelation, which the Apoſtle prays for in behalf of his *Epheſians*.

Epheſ. 1.

2. I further add this, that an *Immediate* Work of the Spirit is defenſible alſo in another ſenſe, *viz.* as it is oppoſed to a neceſſity of outward means on the Spirits part. For as it is in the outward and

and visible Administrations of Providence, God hath tied us to the use of means for our own preservation and subsistence, yet he hath not tied up himself to means, so but that he can, and sometimes doth, step out of his *ordinary* way, and work for us more *immediately*, where means are wanting, or whensoever he thinks fit to act without them: So may it be said in this case, (the invisible Dispensations of Grace) it is our duty to use the means afforded us for our information in the things of God; and it were bold presumption for any Man to expect the Spirits help in the neglect of those means. But God hath no where told us, that I know, that he hath bound up himself from communicating his Light and Grace in a way extraordinary without means, either where the means are denied, or whensoever he is pleased to wave their use. And therefore that distinction given by *Lud. Wolzogen* of the Spirits power, into *Soluta* and *Ligata*, will not, without some limitation, be received by considerate men. *De Scr. Int.* p. 58. &c.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

1. Wolzogen's *bitter Invective against the Pastors of the Reform'd Churches.* 2. *The Nature of Distresses of Conscience, and Spiritual Desertions open'd, and the reality of them proved.* 3. *Of Spiritual Joys from the sense of Gods love; the reality of them also asserted.* 4. *A Conjecture at the Original of that conceit that resolves the aforesaid different apprehensions and impressions into the different temper of the Body.*

Sect. 1. BEfore I shut up my Discourse, I cannot let pass, without some *Animadversion*, what *Lud. Wolzogen* hath written in the latter part of his second Book, *De Scripturarum Interprete:* where he thinks it not enough to have owned and applauded the Exercitators profane scoff at the aforesaid Doctrine of the Reformed Churches about the Spirits enlightening, as a *piece of Enthusiasm, the effect of a deluded fancy,*

Ph. Scr. Int. c 14. par. 3.

attri-

attributing that to the Spirit of God that is the natural effect of the mind, or the apprehenſion of ſome imaginary good. But (as if he were glad of ſuch an occaſion) he breaks forth into a moſt bitter Invective againſt the Doctors and Profeſſors of the Reformed Religion, (for that his aim is at them, is evident by the whole *Series* of his Diſcourſe, notwithſtanding all his palliations) for owning and maintaining any ſuch ſupernatural and immediate Operations of the Spirit; and daringly aſcribes all *to the heats of an exalted Imagination, or the vapours of melancholick Blood, and the unuſual Joys of a recreated Temperament, or perhaps to the clearer light of ſome diſcovered Truth, and ſometimes to the deceitful Dreams or wild Commotions of a diſtracted Mind, falſly conceited to be the Divine Breathings of the Holy Spirit:* And this he eſpecially cenſures in thoſe, *who having attained to ſome eminent Gifts of Utterance, a tenacious Memory, a lively and ready Fancy, with a fluent Elocution, are fervent in their Devotions; whoſe Performances,* he ſays, *are cryed* *De Script. Interpr.* P. 257, &c.

up

up for the actings of the Spirit; not that the Persons thus qualified are so weak, as to think that this comes from the Spirit of God: but that they are willing others should believe so, that they may make the better advantage of such a reputation to gain power into their hands, and as a torrent carry all before them, filling all with Schism and Sedition. This is the sum of his angry Rhetorick in this matter. And his Friend *Velthusius* speaks in the same Dialect. And no doubt there are others in the World of like mind with them: by whom those strong impressions of joy or sorrow that are made upon the hearts of Christians from the sense of sin and wrath on the one hand, or of the saving love of God on the other; and those fervors of spirit that they sometimes feel and express in the solemn services of Religion and exercises of Devotion, are censured as proceeding from the different temperament of the Body, and the suitable workings of a deluded fancy, or ascribed to Enthusiastick impulses, or such like imaginary causes. But let the whole

De usu ration. in Theolog. p. 71, 72.

whole be brought under an impartial examination, and I doubt not but this will appear a groundleſs calumny, to all that ſhall give ſober Reaſon leave to judge without the interpoſure of Prejudice or Paſſion.

Firſt then, let us conſider of thoſe different apprehenſions and impreſſions before-mentioned, and ſee what Scripture and ſound Reaſon teaches us concerning them.

Man, as he is an Intelligent Creature, hath a power connatural to him, of reflecting upon himſelf, and judging of his own ſtate and ways, as he ſtands in relation to God and Eternity. This power of Reflection is commonly known by the name of *Conſcience*; which, as it is appointed to be Mans Domeſtick Guide and Monitor to ſhew him his way, and mind him of his duty; ſo it is a conſtant Inſpector over him, not only as a *Witneſs* of what he is and does; but as a *Judge* alſo in the Name and place of God to paſs ſentence upon him, and give him ſome fore-taſte of thoſe future joys or ſorrows that ſhall be

be the portion of the Children of Men in another World.

Sect. 2. Begin we with the Diſtreſſes of an afflicted Conſcience, ariſing from the ſenſe of Sin, and Gods deſerved wrath for it. This may be conſidered, either as the caſe of one newly awakened by the Terrors of God to a ſad debate with himſelf, having hitherto been a ſtranger to the ſtate and way of Holineſs; or of one already regenerated and begotten again by renewing Grace; one that hath formerly experimented in ſome degree the ſweetneſs of a Heavenly Life, but is now brought into a dark uncomfortable condition, through want of the ſenſe of Gods ſaving love, not without ſad impreſſions of his dreadful diſpleaſure.

Though I ſhall not wholly exclude the former out of my preſent debate, yet it is the latter that I intend chiefly to treat of. Thoſe to whom this befals, during this diſtreſs, walk diſconſolately, find little or no ſweetneſs in any duty they perform, any Ordinance they attend upon, any bleſſing they make

make use of. Sometimes they strongly suspect, if not peremptorily conclude themselves to be reprobates and castaways, to have no Grace in their hearts, no part in the Redemption of Christ, but to be Enemies of God, Captives of Satan, and Vessels of Wrath fitted to destruction. And this is one part of God's Paternal Discipline, wherewith he is pleased to exercise some of his beloved Children; whether to correct their unthankfulness under former enjoyments, or to put their Graces to greater tryal, or to fit them for some special service, or to humble them for some heinous sin, and make them more watchful for the future, or to magnifie his own Grace in upholding them under all their Agonies, and reviving them after their violent Conflicts; or for what other holy ends he may have in it, which we are not now concern'd to discuss. This Spiritual Desertion, (as it hath been hitherto called by sober Divines of all Perswasions, as far as I know) admits of degrees, being not so sharp and dreadful to some as to others;

others; ſome are but for a while under it, others for ſeveral months or years: ſome have a taſte of it in the time of their health and ſtrength, and outward proſperity, others under bodily weakneſſes, or outward diſquiets, or upon a Death-bed.

The caſe of one in this diſtreſs of ſpirit muſt needs be ſad. *Solomon* tells us, *The ſpirit of a man will ſuſtain his infirmity: but a wounded ſpirit who can bear?* So long as the ſpirit remains whole and untoucht, it can bear up under all other preſſures and troubles. But when the wound reacheth the Soul, when Conſcience affrights the Sinner, when this tells him, (whether truly or miſtakingly) that God hath forſaken him, and caſt him off, that the Almighty reckons him his Enemy, and ſets him up as a mark whereon to ſpend the arrows of his indignation; this breaks him all in pieces, this proves a weight ſo heavy, that the burden'd Soul would certainly ſink under it, were there not a ſecret ſupport vouchſafed by God's gracious hand. This makes *David* cry out,

Prov. 18. 14.

out, *My ſin is ever before me:* and elſe- Pſal.51.3.
where; *Thine arrows ſtick faſt in me,* Pſal.38.2.
and thy hand preſſeth me ſore. There is & ſeq.
no ſoundneſs in my fleſh becauſe of thine anger; neither is there any reſt in my bones becauſe of my ſin. For mine iniquities are gone over my head; as an heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.—
Beſides other inſtances that might be given. Nor can this be a wonder to any, were theſe few things conſider'd.

1. *The loving kindneſs of God* (as the Pſal.63.3.
Pſalmiſt ſpeaks) *is better than life.* This is it that makes all a Chriſtians enjoyments truly comfortable, and that allays the bitterneſs of the moſt afflicting croſſes, that animates againſt the ſharpeſt and moſt dreadful conflicts againſt all other evils. Let a Chriſtian live under the ſenſe of Gods reconciling love, and he paſſes cheerfully and undauntedly through whatſoever befals him. Let this therefore be withdrawn, and he is preſently overwhelm'd with dark- Pſal.88.14
neſs; the ſweeteſt bleſſings are taſtleſs, the lighteſt afflictions are intolerable. He looks upon God as an Enemy, and

now every thing appears to him as a meſſenger of death.

2. As the love of God is highly valuable, ſo *who knows the power of his wrath?* If the ſenſe of this, when it fell upon the Innocent Son of God for the ſin of Man, made *HIM* ſhrink, and drew from Him thoſe doleful complaints, *Now is my Soul troubled, and what ſhall I ſay?* And, *My Soul is exceeding ſorrowful, even unto death.* And again, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* How can guilty Sinners think to grapple with theſe Terrors? Well might *Job* cry out as he did in his diſtreſs; *O that my grief were throughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together! For now it would be heavier than the ſand of the Sea, therefore my words are ſwallowed up. For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poiſon whereof drinketh up my ſpirit: the terrors of God do ſet themſelves in aray againſt me.* And Heman, *Thou haſt laid me in the loweſt pit, in darkneſs, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me: and thou haſt afflicted*

Pſal 90.11
Joh.12.27
Mat.26.38
Mat.27.46
Job 6. 2, 3, 4.
Pſa.88.6,7

flicted me with all thy waves. And again, *Lord, why caſteſt thou off my Soul? why hideſt thou thy face from me? I am afflicted and ready to die, from my Youth up: while I ſuffer thy terrors, I am diſtracted. Thy fierce wrath goeth over me: thy terrors have cut me off.* How bitterly did *Francis Spira* expreſs the dolors of his woful Soul! *O* (ſays he) *that I might but feel the leaſt ſenſe of the love of God but for one ſmall moment, as I now feel his heavy wrath that burns like the torments of Hell within me, and afflicts my Conſcience with pangs unutterable!* Ib. v. 14, 15, 16. *Relation of the fearful ſtate of* Fr. Spira, P. 89.

3. In this caſe the poor diſtreſs'd Creature is his own Tormentor. He muſters up diſcouraging Arguments againſt himſelf; and catches hold of whatſoever may ſtrengthen his fears and increaſe his own ſuſpicions of himſelf; and ſtudiouſly diſputes againſt whatſoever comforts are offer'd him. Whatſoever threats he finds in the Word againſt *Hypocrites* and *Apoſtates*, he is ready to apply to himſelf: Whatſoever dreadful Examples of God's fierce

wrath upon the worſt of Sinners he either reads or hears of, he preſently puts himſelf into their place, and conceits *their* condition to be *his*. The precious promiſes of God, and the former *experience* he hath had of Gods goodneſs to him, all are now turn'd into matter of terror and torment. The
Job 23.15 preſence of God is a trouble to him, as *Job* ſays; and the remembrance of God
Pſal. 88. 3. terrifies him, as the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks;
Ib. v. 2. and his Soul refuſeth to be comforted.

4. Satan, by God's permiſſion, taking advantage of ſuch a gloomy ſeaſon, endeavours, by his horrid ſuggeſtions, to heighten the *tempeſt* that is already raiſed in the heart of a Chriſtian, as violent winds increaſe the ſtorms in a raging Sea. It is the main deſign of that devouring Adverſary to deſtroy utterly. In order to which, as he labours to encourage careleſs Sinners in their ſecurity and preſumption, ſo on the contrary he endeavours with all his might to drive diſtreſſed Souls into utter deſperation. And though he attain not the utmoſt of his aims,

yet

yet thus much he usually accomplisheth, to exasperate the present trouble, and increase the disquietment by his bold and violent injections. This is sufficiently intimated to us by the Apostles discourse concerning the incestuous *Corinthian*, who had been cast out of *Church-Communion*; whom he perswades them to receive and comfort, lest he should be *swallow'd up with overmuch sorrow*; adding afterward, how ready himself was to forgive him, *lest Satan should take advantage*, &c. Whence we may gather, that this is one of Satans devices to tread down such as he finds already cast down with sorrow, and to lay on more load, where he sees the burden'd Soul now ready to sink. 2 Cor. 6. 7. Ib. v. 10. 11

5. In such a condition as this, till God himself be pleased to let in some *beam* of light into the disconsolate Heart, no succour from the Creature, how excellent soever, can give any relief. The wound is in the Soul and Spirit, which none can come at to bind up and heal, but the Father of Spirits, and the God of all consolation. *If he hide* Job 23

hide his face, ſaith Elihu, *who then can behold him?* As it is he who had the chief hand in giving the wound, ſo it is he alone that can work the cure.

Now what is there in all this, that is any way inconſiſtent with the grounds of Religion, or principles of ſober Reaſon? Is not the guilt of ſin, and the wrath of God to be trembled at? And is not ſinful Man capable of feeling the bitterneſs hereof? Nay, doth it not ſtand him greatly in hand to be affected with them? Are theſe nothing but the *reeks and vapours of melancholy overwhelming the fancy*, and filling it full of fears and dreadful apprehenſions? This indeed would be very grateful to the *Mad Crue*; who will readily gather from hence, that whenſoever Conſcience gives them any cloſe ſtinging gripes for their wickedneſs, (as I doubt not but it doth ſometimes) it is but making themſelves believe that this is nothing elſe but a *Melancholick Qualm*; and then they will ſoon conclude, that the beſt way to be rid of ſuch an unpleaſing Gueſt, is to run

to

to a *Tavern* or a *Play-House*, to drink or sport away these *Fanatick Vapours*, and *Superstitious Fears*, that break People of their ease, and are Enemies to the peace of Mankind. And such *Mountebank-Medicines* may possibly for a while skin over the sore, and smother the checks of Conscience, by casting the careless Sinner into a *Frolick-Fit*: But whenever God comes thorowly to grapple with the guilty Soul, and set his sins in order before him, casting *Fire-Balls* of wrath and horror into his Conscience, the Poor Wretch will find that these *Anodynes* will prove but miserable Comforters, and that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Heb. 10. 31

But what do we think of the Scripture-instances given before, *Job*, *David*, *Heman*? What of the lamentable state of *Fr. Spira*, besides other Examples, not a few, of later years? What, were they nothing but *Melancholick Fancies*, that drew from those distress'd Souls such bitter complaints, and dreadful outcries? When the last-mention'd

Perſon fell into that woful Agony, his
The Relation before cited, p. 49, &c. "Friends ſuppoſing that Melancholy,
"overſhadowing his judgment, might
"be the cauſe of his trouble, convey'd
"him to *Padua*, a noted *Univerſity* in
"*Italy*, and had the advice of three
"eminent Phyſitians; who, after due
"examination, and mature conſidera-
"tion of things, return'd this Verdict,
"*That they could not diſcern that his*
"*Body was afflicted with any dangerous*
"*Diſtemper originally from it ſelf by*
"*the predominancy of any humour: but*
"*that extream grief oppreſſing the Spi-*
"*rits, ſtirred up ill humours in the Bo-*
"*dy, and thereby diſcompoſed him.* And
"when they had endeavour'd, by Phy-
"ſick, to conſume thoſe humours, or
"at leaſt to divert the courſe of them
"from the Brain; but all without the
"deſired ſucceſs; *Spira* noting it, thus
Ib. p. 52. "beſpeaks them; *Alas, Poor Men, how*
"*far wide are you? do you think that this*
"*Diſeaſe is to be cured by Potions? Be-*
"*lieve me, there muſt be another manner*
"*of Medicine; it's neither Plaiſters, nor*
"*Drugs that can help a fainting Soul*
"*caſt*

"*caſt down with the ſenſe of ſin and the* "*wrath of God. It's only Chriſt that* "*muſt be the Phyſician, and the Goſpel* "*the ſole Antidote.* The Phyſicians, "ſays the Relator, eaſily believed him, "having underſtood the whole truth "of the matter, and therefore wiſht "him to ſeek ſome ſpiritual comfort.

I grant indeed, that Melancholy, where it is predominant, gives great advantage to the increaſe of ſadneſs, and the multiplying of perplexing fears: and when Conſcience is awakened, its fears and diſquietments may be heighten'd by Imagination, and this ſet on work by ſmall accidents, as the ſound of a *Knell*, or the rattling of *Thunder*, or ſome frightful *ſight*. But ſtill the firſt and principal cauſe of the diſtreſs is ſomething really formidable to a ſober and ſedate Mind. And if any ſhould judge otherwiſe, I think, I may without any imputation of raſhneſs or uncharitableneſs, ſuſpect them to doubt whether Vindictive Juſtice, and the Everlaſting Pains of Hell, be a *reality*. And if any ſhould be of that mind,

mind, let them, if they think good, ſolace themſelves with ſuch dreams, till experience reſolve the queſtion.

Sect. 3. Come we in the next place, to ſpeak ſomething of the joys that are begotten in a Chriſtians heart by the diſcovery of God's love to him. Touching this, thus much we find;

Rom. 5. 5. 1. That *the love of God is ſhed abroad in the hearts* of Chriſtians *by the Spirit of God.* And that the ſame Holy Spirit

Rom. 8. 16, 17. *witneſſeth with their ſpirits* that they are the Children of God, and Heirs of Glory. Where the Apoſtle ſpeaks of a twofold witneſs of our Adoption. 1. The Spirit of God witneſſeth this,

Tit. 3. 5. 2 Theſ. 2. 13. Eph. 4. 30. partly by begetting that Grace in the heart that is the peculiar Character of a Child of God, (in which reſpect he is ſaid to ſeal Believers to the day of Redemption; *viz.* by ſtamping the holy image of God upon them) partly

1 Cor 2. 12 by enabling them to diſcern this work, and ſee this ſeal ſtamp'd upon them. 2. The regenerate Conſcience, enabled and aſſiſted by Gods Spirit to ſee this, doth thence infer a Chriſtians Sonſhip.

2. Where

2. Where this is wrought, it ſerves to fill the heart with exceeding joy above what the greateſt earthly comfort can beget. Witneſs that of the Pſalmiſt; *There be many that ſay, Who will ſhew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy Countenance upon us. Thou haſt put gladneſs in my heart, more than in the time that their Corn and their Wine increaſed.* And that of the Apoſtle, who ſpeaking of Chriſt, ſays; *Whom having not ſeen, ye love; in whom though now ye ſee him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unſpeakable and full of glory.* The teſtimony that Conſcience gives to a Chriſtian of his Integrity, is (as St. *Paul* tells us) matter of much joy. But there are who conceive, that beſides this, there are ſometimes afforded ſome more immediate refreſhments from the Holy Spirit. And of this mind is a learned Author, in a Treatiſe publiſhed ſome few years ago, where he thus ſpeaks: *The Feaſt of a good Conſcience is the true Chriſtians daily diet; and ſure, whatever the rich men of the World think, he only can be ſaid to fare deli-*

Pſal. 4. 6, 7.

1 Pet. 1. 8.

2 Cor. 1. 12.

Cauſes of the Decay of Chriſtian Piety, Chap. 1.

deliciously. Nay, he hath yet more supernatural food, Manna rain'd down immediately from Heaven, the Holy Spirit sent on purpose to refresh and support him; those Joys which differ rather in degree than kind from those which are to be his final portion.

3. Hence are Christians enabled to pass cheerfully through the sharpest trials and sorest afflictions that can befal them in this their mournful pilgrimage. *We rejoyce*, saith the Apostle, *in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also.* And the Hebrews *took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in Heaven a better and an enduring substance.*

Rom. 5. 2, 3

Heb. 10. 34.

4. Where these Joys are in their full tide, they carry the Christian triumphantly through the bittersest pangs of death: of which there are numerous examples in all Ages of the Church.

These comforts are not afforded to all in like measure, nor to any always at the same height. It seems good to the Wisdom of God so to dispense them, as

as that those who have the largest portion, shall know that there is a wide difference between Earth and Heaven; and that they are yet but Pilgrims, and in their wilderness-state, though he sometimes gives them for their encouragement a *Pisgah*-sight of that Heavenly *Canaan*, towards which they are passing.

But what! must all the forementioned joys and refreshing comforts that the Holy Scripture speaks of, and the experience of the Saints bears witness to, be counted no better than a juggle or a cheat? the *transport of frantick raptures*, or the mere *illusion of an Enthusiastick fancy*, refresh'd with *brisk and active spirits*, and filled with *warm and sprightly imaginations*? Was it such an imaginary comfort that *David* pray'd for, when he says, *Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.* Psal. 51. 8. And again, *Restore to me the joy of thy Salvation.* Ib. v. 12. And when the Psalmist says, *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my Soul.* Psa. 94. 19. And again,

Pſa.112.4. again, *To the upright there ariſeth light in the darkneſs.* Is this nothing but the *raiſing of the Blood, and the breaking out of the natural ſpirits from the oppreſſion of melancholick fumes, and refreſhing the drooping fancy?* When the Apoſtle profeſſeth, that he was *filled with comfort, and exceeding joyful in all* 2Cor.7.4. *his tribulations:* Was this nothing but the effect of a *Sanguine Complexion*, or the product of *pleaſing Phantaſms?* Did *this* make *Paul* and *Silas* ſing in their chains? or was it *this* that cheer'd the hearts of thoſe Bleſſed Martyrs, who with ſo much joy and triumph embraced the *Stake*, and clapped their half-conſumed hands in the midſt of the flames? To ſay nothing of the many inſtances that might be given, both in elder and later times, of Perſons, eminent for Wiſdom and Holineſs, who, in languiſhing ſickneſſes, when their Bodies have been ſo waſted, and their ſtrength ſo impair'd, that they could not ſtir to feed or help themſelves, (the whole frame of nature being broken by cruciating and conſuming pains) yet have

have then felt those inward Joys in their Souls which they could not smother; but as Men that stood upon the threshold of Glory, and had a ravishing sight and sense of the unconceivable pleasures of that other World, have, with that vigor and alacrity (and yet with judgment and prudence) poured out Praises and Thanksgivings to their Gracious Redeemer, that it hath at once delighted and astonished the hearts of their intelligent Friends that came to visit them.

Sect. 4. I cannot think it possible that the truth of these things should be question'd by any that do indeed believe the Scriptures, and have felt the power of the Word upon their hearts. But there is a Scoptick Generation of Men, whose minds are so tinctur'd with a *profane gaiety*, that the whole Bible is become to them no better than a Play-Book or a Romance, upon which they love to exercise their drolling Wits, by putting the Doctrines and Discourses of the Prophets and Apostles into a ridiculous dress, the better to expose them to the scorn

scorn of Infidels; as if they read that sacred Volume to no other purpose, than (as a late Author speaks of some) *to enable them to blaspheme God in his own stile.*

Gentleman's Calling, Sect. 6.

I have indeed oft wonder'd what should betray any to this fond and irrational conceit of resolving the Agonies of distress'd Consciences, and the contrary Joys of serious Christians under assurance, into the different temperature of their Bodies, and the suitable workings of their Fancy; till I met with a piece of new Divinity in a late *Belgick* Tractator, and then I began to suspect out of what Chimny came all this smoke. For this account doth that Gentleman give us of the Holy Prophets mentioned in Scripture: "That "their Revelations proceeded from the "strength and heighth of Imagination, "and were diversified according to the "different temper and constitution of "their Bodies, which caused different "workings in their fancy. Hence, he "says, those Prophets that were of "cheerful and debonair complexion, "pro-

Tractat. Theologico-Polit. cap. 2.

"propheſied altogether of Peace and "Proſperity, Victory over Enemies, "and all things to Mens hearts content; "theſe being ſuch things as beſt ſuited "with their Imaginations. On the "other ſide, thoſe Prophets that were "ſad and melancholick, or of angry and "moroſe tempers, they altogether pro-"pheſied of War and Blood-ſhed, De-"ſolation and Deſtruction, theſe being "ſuch things, as their drooping and "dejected Fancy did moſt run upon. "Accordingly he tells us, that what-"ſoever Revelations the Prophets re-"ceived, they did not at all better or "advance their Underſtandings, or be-"get in them any ſolid knowledge: "They were good honeſt Men indeed, "but none of the wiſeſt: for Men of "note, for Wiſdom, never were Pro-"phets; that being a work that be-"long'd to the Imagination, and not "to the Judgment. In the ſame Chap-ter he undertakes to give us a reaſon why *Joſiah*, when he had heard the Book of the Law read in his ears, and was thereby made apprehenſive of ſome

impendent calamity; would not ſend to the Prophet *Jeremy*, (though then living) "becauſe (forſooth) he was a "Melancholick Man, and one, who, by "his many ſufferings and hard uſage, "* was grown weary of his life, and "therefore was not likely to propheſie "any good. But he choſe to ſend ra-"ther to the Propheteſs *Huldah*, who "being a Woman, and ſo [it ſeems, ac-"cording to the ſoftneſs of that Sex] "more inclined to tenderneſs and com-"paſſion, was a fitter inſtrument for "God to reveal his Mercy by. This is a piece of that Authors *Political Atheology*. And truly I know no kind of Divinity (if we may call any ſuch thing by that name) from which this conceit, that we have under conſideration, can more fairly be thought to derive its original. But if we muſt look any higher for its pedegree, I cannot tell whom to father it upon, (next to the Father of Lyes) unleſs it be that *Arabian* Philoſopher of great note for Learning, who is ſaid to aſcribe the Miracles wrought by the Primitive Chri-

* *Let the Reader take notice of this Tractators fond miſtake: for where do we find that the Prophet* Jeremy *met with any ſuch hard uſage till after* Joſiah's *death?*

Avicenna.

Chriſtians to the power of an exalted Imagination; by virtue of which, he ſays, they had entertain'd a ſtrong conceit of the Deity of their Maſter: and this fancy (in his apprehenſion) was that which wrought ſuch Wonders in Chriſts Name. Whether that which heightened this Pagans confidence to ſo bold and abſurd an aſſertion, were any extraordinary skill he had in the *Anatomy of the Brain*, or the *Laws of Mechaniſm*, I know not. But whatever grounds he might be ſuppoſed to have, I think none that heartily owns the Chriſtian Name, will aſcribe ſuch a ridiculous perſwaſion to the depth of his Philoſophy, but to the heighth of his Infidelity.

CHAP. III.

1. *Regular Zeal in the Duties of Religion justified:* 2. *And vindicated from the charge of Enthusiasm;* 3. *Madness;* 4. *Dissimulation, and placing the whole of Religion in such fervors;* 5. *And of aiming at ill ends.*

Sect. 1. I Come now in the last place, to speak something of the prejudices taken at those *fervors* that appear in some in the Exercises of Religion, breaking forth in earnest and pathetical Expressions, whether in bewailing of Sin, or petitioning for Mercy, or Thanksgiving for Blessings received, or dispensing the Word of Reconciliation to the People. This is sharply censured by the aforesaid Author *Lud. Wolzogen*, as savouring of Enthusiasm, or bordering upon Frenzy, and cunningly designed for the driving on of some ambitious ends.

To

To this I Reply, We are commanded to be *fervent in ſpirit*, *ſerving the Lord*: and that *whatſoever our hand findeth to do*, *we ſhould do it with our might*. The Pſalmiſt ſays, *I cried with my whole heart*. And even that Heathen Prince, to whoſe Royal City the Prophet *Jonah* was ſent with a threatning meſſage, requires his Subjects to *cry mightily unto God*. The Apoſtle ſays, *It is good to be zealouſly affected always in a good thing*. And is there any thing ſo good, as that it can better challenge the heighth and heat of our affections and endeavours than Religion, in the ſervices whereof we have ſo immediately to do with God, who calls for the heart, and hath declared his abhorring of a dull, luke-warm temper? I grant, that it is too poſſible for Zeal to have its exceſſes and irregularities: And among the reſt, there is an indiſcreet Zeal ſometimes appearing in ſome well-meaning Perſons, that wants the conduct of a well-order'd Judgment: which as I take to be much more pardonable than a careleſs

Rom. 12. 11. Eccl. 9. 10. Pſal. 119. 145. Jon. 3. 8. Gal. 4. 18. Rev. 3. 15, 16.

leſs or prophane indifferency; ſo I conceive it may have miniſtred ſome occaſion to thoſe vile reproaches that are caſt upon all that are ſeriouſly and heartily Religious.

But that fervor of ſpirit that I undertake for, and aſſert to be not only *juſtifiable*, but *commendable* in the Duties of Religion, is *that which is raiſed by a right apprehenſion of the Object about which it is converſant, guided by a compoſed underſtanding, and attended with an humble awful Reverence becoming ſinful duſt in its appearance before the Great and Holy God.*

Should not Sinners in their addreſſes to the Moſt High, have their hearts deeply touch'd with ſorrow for the ſins that they apprehend themſelves, or others for whom they are concern'd, to be guilty of, or liable to? Doth it become an Offender, that is to beg his Pardon, to do it in a ſtupid manner, as if he had no more ſenſe of his fault than a Stone or a Brute? And what incongruity is it for us in our Petitions for Mercy, to have our deſires raiſed

to

to the higheſt pitch that we can reach? Is the pardoning and purifying Grace of Chriſt of ſo little worth or uſe to us, as they need be but coldly or careleſly askt, as if our words freezed between our lips, or as if we did not greatly paſs whether we were heard or no? Or can we expect that God ſhould hear thoſe Petitions, which we our ſelves ſcarce feel when they go from us? Did ever any Malefactor plead at the Bar for his Life, or an hunger-ſtarv'd Begger crave an Alms at the door, after this dull and ſleepy rate? And when we are bleſſing God for his Benefits, ſhould we not, with the Pſalmiſt, call upon all our powers to praiſe him? And ſhould not thoſe, whoſe work it is to diſpenſe the Word of Life, deliver their Meſſage in ſuch a manner, as that their Hearers may diſcern they are in good earneſt, and that the Word ſpoken to them is that whereon their Eternal Life or Death depends? Is it not requiſite that the Servants of Chriſt ſhould, in this work, be (as is recorded for the honour of *Apollos*) *fervent in ſpirit?*

Pſal. 103.

Act. 18. 25.

especially considering the quality of most Hearers, who are so hardly raised to a due point of zeal and fervency, that (as Mr. *George Herbert* speaks) *they need a Mountain of Fire to kindle them.* The said worthy Author adviseth Preachers to make choice of *moving and ravishing Texts:* and to *dip and season all their Words and Sentences in their Hearts before they come into their Mouths, truly affecting, and cordially expressing all that they say, so that the Auditors may plainly perceive that every word is heart-deep:* with other passages of like import. In short, what cause of blame is it for any in the exercises of Devotion, whether publick or private, to endeavour what they can to have their own and others hearts affected in some measure suitable to the work in hand, and to have their expressions in some due proportion answerable to the affections of their hearts? This is all I plead for; and the utmost (as far as I know) that can be charged upon the *Generality* of the Persons accus'd. What some particular here and there

Priest to the Temple, Chap. 7.

there may be guilty of, I am not concern'd to vindicate. That there are many follies and extravagancies in ſome of all Perſwaſions, he muſt be a great Stranger in the World that knows not; and miſerably enſlaved to the Intereſt of a Party, that confeſſeth not. But the Lord knows we have all more cauſe to blame our ſelves for our coldneſs and remiſſneſs, than others can have to blame us for too much fervor. I heartily wiſh, that both they and we were all more thorowly Baptized with this Fire.

But let us a little examine the pretenſions of our Accuſers. As for the charge of *Enthuſiaſm*, which ſome make uſe of to aſperſe what they diſlike in Religion: * *The Word* (ſaith a late Learned Author) *is of it ſelf good, but fallen into diſcredit by the vice of Men; for there is an holy Enthuſiaſm; when the Soul is wholly irradiated or enlightened of God.* But taking it in the worſt ſenſe,

Sect. 2. *Object.* 1.

Sol. Vox per ſe bona, vitio hominum eſt infamata: eſt enim ſanctus Enthuſiaſmus, de quo Heſychius. Ἐνθυσιασμός ἐστιν, ὅτε ἡ Ψυχὴ ὅλη ἐλλάμπηται τοῦ Θεοῦ, M. Martinius in Lexic. Philolog.

ſenſe, as it is by theſe Objectors, I may ſay of it, as Mr. *Hales* of *Eaton* once ſaid of the words *Schiſm* and *Hereſie*, that it is made a *Theological Scare-Crow*. For it being inconſiſtent with ſome Mens Principles to acknowledge any efficacious ſupernatural Operations of the Spirit of Grace upon the heart of Man, and as contrary to their diſpoſition and practice to be ſeriouſly fervent in Religion, it becomes their Intereſt, to brand whatſoever lies out of their road with the opprobrious name of Enthuſiaſm; that is, (as they ſometimes explain it) a pretence of being acted by the Holy Spirit, or a falſe conceit of Inſpiration.

What the Sect of Enthuſiaſts was, appears ſufficiently by the teſtimony of thoſe Learned Men who have written againſt them both in former and later times. From whom we have this account; "That thoſe who were cenſu-
"red and condemned by the Church
"of Chriſt under that Notion, were
"ſuch as ſlighted, if not rejected, the
"Scriptures as a dead Letter, a lame

"and

"and imperfect Guide, insufficient to "be the Rule of Faith or Practice; in "room whereof they profes'd to be "acted by Immediate Revelations, "which they call'd the Internal and "Spiritual Word, teaching them high-"er Wisdom than any contain'd in the "Scriptures. And whatsoever was "strongly suggested to them, or made "any vehement impression upon their "minds, as that which they thought "they should believe or do, they em-"braced it as a Divine Inspiration, and "Magisterially imposed it upon others, "were it never so inconsistent with, or "opposite to the Doctrine of the Holy "Scriptures, or the Dictates of sound "and sober Reason. And being by "this means laid open to Satanical De-"lusions, they were easily drawn to "believe the grossest absurdities, and "some of them to practice the vilest "wickednesses, contrary to common "Honesty and the Publick Peace, justi-"fying all by their pretended Revela-"tions. This is the Character we have of Enthusiasts, both Antient and Mo-

dern,

dern, from Authors of unqueſtionable credit. And if there be any where in this World any of the remainders of that Sect, (as it's probable enough there are) that entertain ſuch wild and frantick Conceptions, let them bear their ſin and ſhame. But of this I am ſure, that the Perſons thus charged by *Wolzogen* and his Complices, can ſafely appeal to all unprejudiced Perſons that know them, and to the moſt Wiſe and Holy God, who is greater than all, that they are as clear from any compliance with that *Infatuated Generation*, as the beſt of their Accuſers. For,

1. They heartily own and ſubmit to the Holy Scriptures, as the only ſure and ſufficient Rule of Faith and Life. Accordingly whatſoever Conceptions may riſe within them, or be ſuggeſted to them in matters of Religion, they bring them to the *Bar* of Scripture, to ſtand or fall according to its Judgment, not impoſing their Sentiments upon the Scripture, but receiving the ſenſe of Scripture from the Scrip-

Scripture it ſelf; according to what hath been aſſerted in the precedent Diſcourſe.

2. In matters difficult and obſcure, that are more darkly laid down in Scripture, (eſpecially in the Prophetick parts of it) they forbear to determine peremptorily, chuſing rather to ſatisfie themſelves with a modeſt heſitancy, and abhorring to make their Judgments the meaſure of anothers Faith, or ſuperciliouſly to cenſure or deſpiſe any for their different apprehenſions.

3. They plead for no other Spirit of Revelation, than what the Apoſtle prays for in behalf of the *Epheſians*, Chap. 1. Verſ. 17, 18, 19. which Revelation conſiſts not in diſcovering any *New Object* to be received, unreveal'd in Scripture: but only in qualifying the *Subject* by curing the native and acquired blindneſs and carnality of our minds, that we may rightly underſtand and embrace the Truths which the Scripture propounds.

4. They

4. They ſolemnly profeſs and declare to all the World, that whatſoever they are taught by the Holy Spirit, as it is by and from the Scripture, ſo it is in the regular exerciſe of their rational Faculties; and ſuch as they are ready at all times to give an account of from Scripture-grounds to any ſober intelligent Perſon that ſhall demand it. They therefore diſown and reject the abſurd Principles and arrogant Preſumptions of the falſly-call'd *Myſtical Theology*, (ſet on foot antiently, and revived in later years) that pretends to *Ecſtatick Raptures* and *Deifications* of the Soul, by an utter ceſſation of all Intellectual Operations. The Original of which Phantaſtick Theology, Dr. *Meric Caſaubon* derives from the Heathen Philoſophers; intimating withal, the great Affinity between this and the *New Method* ſo much cried up of late: Which thoſe whom it concerns, may conſider of at their leiſure.

Treatiſe concerning Enthuſiaſm, Ch. 3.

In

In the mean time I take that for granted, which hath been (agreeably to plain and evident Scripture) the acknowledged Doctrine of the Catholick Church, however denied and derided by ſome late Innovators; That the Holy Spirit of God is (according to Chriſts own promiſe) given to dwell in the Hearts of Chriſtians, to beget and preſerve ſpiritual life in them, to conduct them in their way, to ſtrengthen them with might in the Inner Man, to ſhed abroad the love of God in their Hearts, and witneſs their adoption, to aſſiſt them in holy ſervices, and gradually to perfect the work of Sanctification in them. To ſpend many words in proving this, which is already ſo clear to all unbyaſs'd Judgments, were to to light a Candle before the Sun. As for that ridiculous ſenſe that ſome have endeavour'd to faſten upon theſe, or ſome of theſe Scriptures, as if they were to be underſtood only of the Spirit as given to the Church in common, and not to particular Chriſtians, it is ſo utterly inconſiſtent with the

Joh. 14. 16 Ch. 15. 26. 1 Jo. 3. laſt. Rom. 8. 9, 14. Pſ. 143. 10 Eph. 3. 16. Rom. 8. 15 &V. 26. 27 Chap. 5. 5. 2 Cor. 3. 18 Eph. 5. 18, 19, 20. Ezek. 36. 26, 27.

the ſcope of thoſe reſpective places, and runs ſo contrary to the whole ſtream of Scripture and all Antiquity, that I think it needleſs to waſte time in refuting it. He that will but conſiderately read over the ſeveral places, and faithfully examine the Context, may eaſily ſee the vanity of it. That of the Learned *Grotius* is clear and full, *Not only the whole Collective Body of the Faithful, but alſo particular Believers are rightly call'd the Temple* [of the Holy Ghoſt] *becauſe the Spirit of God dwelleth in their Minds.* And if thoſe who are careful (according to the Apoſtles counſel) not to quench the Spirit, but to ſtir up the Grace of God in them, have their hearts more warm'd and enlarged in holy Duties, than others, who either want that meaſure of Gifts, or are defective in improving them, I cannot conjecture why this ſhould be made a matter of reproach, but that ſome Men are angry at every thing that is not juſt of their own *ſize*, or not ſuitable to their *guſt*; and therefore are reſolved to revile and calumniate

Non tantùm tota fidelium collectio, ſed & fideles ſinguli rectè appellantur templum, quia in ipſorum mentibus Spiritus Dei habitat, Grot. Annot. ad Eph. 2. 22.

niate it, though by those wounds the heart and life of Religion be found to lie a bleeding.

To shut up this, I might here mind the Objector, and those of his way, how much it concerns them to acquit themselves of that Enthusiasm which they impeach others for. It's known to be one of the first Principles of that Grand Enthusiast *Valentius Weigelius*; That *he who would know the truth, must forget whatsoever he hath learnt from Men and Books, and lay it all aside, as if he had never been acquainted with any thing, and retreat into himself, and fetch all his knowledge from thence.* Let this be referr'd to our Authors Consideration, wherein this differs from the great Principle of his admired Master.

V. Commentarium Fo. Hoornbeck de paradoxis & heterodoxis Weigelianis.

Cartes. diss. de Methodo, & de Principiis Philosophiæ.

But let us hear what is further Objected, to justifie these Mens prejudices.

Sect. 3. *Object.* 2. Secondly, It is said by some, "These "heats are but the Frantick Freaks of "a Crazed Brain, and the product of a "Religious Frenzy.

Sol. 1. I answer: 1. We need not be much moved with this senseless charge, when we find the Pen-men of Sacred Writ to have little better measure made them by the same hand. For of them we are told, that *they wrote many times they knew not what, and gave forth Oracles, when they were beside themselves:* (his word is *alienata mente:*) which was one of the vile Positions of the *Montanists* and *Cataphrygians* [a], rejected and condemned both by Antient and Modern Divines. And yet to justifie this Assertion, our Author [b] gravely cites *Cicero de Divinatione*, calling the Raptures of their Pagan Vates by the Name of *Furor*; and *Virgil* calling *Sibylla* a *Mad Propheteſs:* and *Justin* the Historian, *Lib.* 24. where speaking of the much-famed Oracle at *Delphos*, he

Lud. Wolz. de Script. Int. p. 1. c. 6.

a *V. Riveti Isagog. ad S. Scr. c.* 2. *Sect.* 5 *ubi super hac re citat. Hieronym. pro. in Esaiam.*

b *Censura Censuræ*, p. 131, 132

he tells us of a very deep Cave in the Mount *Parnaſſus*, near *Apollo*'s Temple, out of which proceeded a cool Air, which being driven upward by a certain Wind, did turn the minds of the Prophets into Madneſs; who being thus inſpired, were forced to give Reſponſes to thoſe who came to conſult with the Oracle.

Wolzogen is much briefer in citing this of *Juſtin*, for he ſays no more out of him but this, *That the minds of the Prophets were turned into madneſs, when they were filled with God.* But I have related it ſomething more largely out of the Author himſelf, that the Reader may the better underſtand the Hiſtorians meaning. And is it not a goodly piece of ſervice, and greatly for the honour of Religion, that a Chriſtian Writer ſhould compare the temper of the Lords Prophets, ſpeaking by Inſpiration from Heaven, to the Fanatick Fury of thoſe Diabolical Prophets, that were evidently acted by a blaſt from Hell? He that hath

ſo little Reverence for thoſe Worthies, who were infallibly aſſiſted in what they preach'd and wrote, as to ſpeak thus reproachfully of them, no wonder if he trample upon the Servants of the ſame Lord now. But what do I ſpeak of the diſhonour done to the Servants of God by a Man, that ſpeaks ſo irreverently of God himſelf and his Holy Word in many paſſages throughout his Book? as is obvious enough to the view of every unbyaſs'd Reader.

2. 2. Let it be conſider'd, what colour there can be for this Imputation, when the Perſons thus charged are known to be ſober and conſiderate, and in all their diſcourſes and affairs as rational as other Men, and as compoſed every way as any of thoſe who thus traduce them. As therefore when ſome ſaid blaſphemouſly of our bleſſed Joh. 10. 20, 21. Saviour, *He hath a Devil, and is mad, why hear ye him?* Others made anſwer, *Theſe are not the words of him that*

that hath a Devil. As if they had ſaid, *Men poſſeſt or mad do not ſpeak after this rate, or carry themſelves after this manner.* So may I ſay of thoſe who are now reproach'd for Mad-men by a Generation of the ſame profane temper; Examine the behaviour of thoſe who are thus calumniated, obſerve their grave deportment, their ſerious diſcourſe, their circumſpect carriage, their prudent conduct of affairs; and let ſober Reaſon judge whether theſe be the effects of Madneſs.

"Tuſh, may ſome ſay, this is no- *Exception.*
"thing. Men may have a partial or
"particular madneſs, that takes them
"in ſome things, while they remain
"ſober in others. They may be very
"ſedate and compoſed in their other
"affairs, and yet in matters of Reli-
"gion they may be quite beſide them-
"ſelves.

For a Reply to this; 1. Be it ſo; *Reply.* then perhaps the Objectors may be as

much concern'd in this as any others, and the charge may be retorted upon themſelves; though they ſpeak and act like Men of Reaſon in other things, yet it ſeems in matters of Religion they may be mad. *Ipſi viderint.* Let them-
Jer. 50. 38. ſelves look to it. The Prophet *Jeremy* ſaith of the *Babylonians*, that they were *Mad upon their Idols.* And I have heard many years ago, that Doctor *Holdſworth*, then Vice-Chancellor of *Cambridge*, did, in his Speech at the Publick Commencement, complain of ſome in his time that were *ad inſaniam uſque ſuperſtitioſi*, ſuperſtitious unto madneſs.

2. But, 2. We will not let it go thus. The Perſons we are ſpeaking of, and pleading for, are ſuch as can and do give as intelligent an account (whenſoever required) as any other, of what they profeſs and practiſe in matters of Religion, from the unerring Word of Truth. This they plead for; to this they appeal; by the Precepts

of this they live; and in the hopes of what is there promiſed, through the Grace of Chriſt, they reſolve to die. And if this be the Cogniſance and Character of Mad-men, then let us henceforth look for Sober Perſons no where but in Taverns, Play-Houſes, and Bedlams, and reckon all other for Mad.

3. Many inſtances might be given of thoſe, who while, in the days of their vanity, they were ſtrangers to the power and life of Godlineſs, had the ſame contemptible apprehenſions of theſe things, and have, with a kind of diſdain, wonder'd what thoſe perſons ail'd, whom they perceived to be zealouſly affected in matters of Religion above the common rate. But after they came to feel the perſwaſive efficacy of that Regenerating Grace, which ſome are bold to deride, changing their hearts, they have ſeen things with other eyes, and with indignation wonder'd at themſelves, that they ſhould be ſo ſlight and ſtupid in mat- 3.

ters of so infinite concernment. I doubt not but St. *Paul*, while he was a persecuting Pharisee, wonder'd at the Christians, as a company of Mad-men, for what they profess'd and did: But afterward, when his eyes were open'd to see his errour, he counted himself
Act. 26. 11 no better than Mad for what he had formerly done against them.

4. To which I may add, in the last place, That many of those, who, in the days of their health and jollity, have derided the persons we speak of, for a company of silly, distracted Fools; when a Death-bed hath awaken'd their Conscience, and brought them to a more sober use of their Reason, and a more serious view of Eternity, have then changed their minds, and heartily wisht themselves of the number of those whom they have formerly reproach'd, and would be glad to have some of their Oyl to put into their own dying Lamps, before they were to engage in their last conflict, and pass from

from hence into another World. But however, the time is haſtening, when theſe Calumniators will be ſufficiently convinced of their folly, and take their own reproaches home to themſelves; when that ſhall be fulfill'd that the Author of the Book of Wiſdom tells us; "That the Righteous Man ſhall "ſtand with great boldneſs before the "face of ſuch as have afflicted him, "and made no account of his labours. "When they ſee it, they ſhall be trou- "bled with terrible fear, and ſhall be "amazed at the ſtrangeneſs of his Sal- "vation, ſo far beyond all that they "looked for. And they reſenting "and groaning for anguiſh of ſpirit, "ſhall ſay within themſelves, *This was* "*he whom we had ſometimes in deriſion,* "*and a proverb of reproach: We Fools* "*counted his life madneſs, and his end* "*to be without honour: How is he num-* "*bred with the Children of God, and* "*his lot is among the Saints!* Wiſd. 5. 1, to 6.

"But,

Sect. 4. Object. 3. "But, may ſome ſay, there have "been many Pretenders to the Spirit, "both in former and latter Ages, who "have abuſed the World.

Sol. 1. 1. Very true; and what will you conclude from thence? There likewiſe have been, and are, many Pretenders to Learning and Honeſty, who, by their cunning ſlights and artifices have deceived many. Is this any prejudice to Learning and Honeſty where they indeed are? Or muſt we reſolve that theſe are no where to be found, becauſe of ſuch falſe Pretenders? Is this to argue like Men of Reaſon?

2. 2 Cor. 3. 13, 14, 15. 2. The Apoſtle tells us, That the Devil transforms himſelf into an Angel of Light, and teaches his Miniſters the like art of Impoſture. It is one of his grand methods of deceit, to imitate in and by his Servants, the operations of the Holy Spirit of Chriſt, that he may thereby cheat the World, and

and bring the true workings of the Spirit of God into ſuſpicion and diſgrace: As in former times he made uſe of *Apollonius Thyanæus*, and others, to do ſtrange wonders, the better to diſcredit the true Miracles of Chriſt and his Apoſtles.

But, 3. Without further debate, let Mens fruits evidence by what Spirit they are acted. If Men be proud, boaſters, ſelf-admirers, ſcoffers at Holineſs, fierce, unpeaceable, implacable, haters of thoſe that are good, greedy Proſecutors of this preſent World, *&c.* Theſe, and ſuch like, we are ſure, are not led by the Spirit of Chriſt, but captivated by that unclean Spirit, that works effectually in the Children of diſobedience. But if I ſee in any the evident fruits of the Spirit of God in humility, love, meekneſs, ſelf-denial, crucifixion to the World, and an heavenly converſation; I ſhould be as loth to charge ſuch with falſe pretences, as I would be to fall under their con- 3.

coudemnation, who call good evil, and evil good.

Object. 4. "But perhaps it will be further ſaid, "That Mens fervour and fluency in "exerciſes of Devotion, are made the "*heights of Godlineſs*, and mightily "cried up as if they were the *whole of* "*Religion.*

Sol. I anſwer; It is paſt all doubt that there are, among Perſons of all Perſwaſions, ſome ſelf-deceived Hypocrites, who place the *All* of Religion in Externals. Thus many among the Papiſts place their Religion in ſaying over ſo many Prayers, (though in a Language that they underſtand not) in going on Pilgrimage to the Image of this or that Saint, in uſing certain Rites preſcribed them by their Guides, and performing the Penances injoined them, and other ſuch like outward Obſervances. And I doubt not but amongſt Proteſtants there are too many (of ſeveral Perſwaſions) that place their

their Religion in being for this or that particular way of Worſhip, different from others, and in the practice of thoſe things, which are (at the beſt) but ſubſervient means, inſtrumentally conducing to expreſs or excite the inward Devotion of the Heart, wherein the life of Religion conſiſts. But as they who thus do are in a miſerable miſtake; ſo who they are that do ſo, falls not under the cogniſance of any Mortal, unleſs they diſcover their hypocriſie by their open wickedneſs. Indeed whoever they be that take up with any (though the moſt plauſible, coſtly, and laborious) ſervices of Religion, while they indulge themſelves in their ſin, and walk in contrariety to Chriſts Goſpel; *By the Grace where-of we are trained up to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent World*, (as I fear multitudes do) ſuch are ſelf-condemned Hypocrites. But where there evidently appears a ſerious care to credit the truth profeſs'd by

Tit. 2. 11, 12.

by a ſuitable Converſation, by labouring to walk in all good Conſcience towards God and towards Men; to cenſure ſuch (whatſoever Perſwaſion they be of) for making any outward Exerciſes of Devotion, the All, or the Chief of their Religion, is ſuch a piece of uncharitableneſs, as is enough to nullifie any Mans Religion in the World who ſo judgeth. Would Men be perſwaded to dwell more at home, and be better acquainted with ſearching their own hearts, they would not be ſo ready to ſtep into Gods Throne, and take upon them to cenſure the hearts of others, which none can have the immediate inſpection of, but that Omniſcient Spirit, to whom all ſecrets are open.

Sect. 5. *Object.* 5. *Wolzog. loc. cit.*

And the like reply might ſerve to the laſt and bitterest part of the charge, *viz.* "That theſe fervours and fluent "expreſſions in the ſervices of Reli-"gion, are made uſe of to drive on "ſome ambitious deſign, to get a name "in

"in the World, that being cried up "for Men divinely inſpired, they may "have the advantage to get power in- "to their hands, and rule all, and ſo "fill the World with Schiſms and Se- "ditions.

Sol. We are now come to the bottom of the Veſſel, where we have the dregs of the Adverſaries paſſion. It ſeems he would parallel thoſe he thus bitterly calumniates with thoſe *Demagogues* of old, who, by their bewitching Oratory charm'd the Hearts of the Vulgar, and thereby accompliſh'd their own ends upon them. For anſwer to this, I ſhall ſay in the general, (as once one ſaid in another caſe) *Grave crimen, mi homo, ſi verum; æque gravis calumnia, ſi falſum.* This is indeed a grievous crime, if true; and as grievous a calumny, if falſe. More particularly, I ſhall reply theſe few things.

1. The

1. 1. The beſt Actions in the World are capable of being blackt and blemiſhid by a malevolent Spirit, faſtening the vileſt ends upon them. Holy *Job*, as upright as he was, (God himſelf bearing witneſs thereto) yet was ſlander'd by the Devil, as aiming at baſe unworthy ends in all the Service he did for God. And the like hath been the lot of God's moſt faithful Servants in all Ages. When their Enemies knew not what fault to find with their known and declared Actions, they would either feign ſome horrid crime to accuſe them of, or (more plauſibly) make uſe of this malicious artifice of the great Accuſer of the Brethren, to blemiſh their moſt innocent practices, as intended for a cunning Engine to carry on ſome baſe deſign; by which means they have endeavoured to raiſe ſuſpicions of them in the minds of their jealous Governors, and enrage the Rulers of the World againſt them. Thus, when the Jews,

Jews, after their return from Captivity, were buſie in rebuilding the City *Jeruſalem*, in the days of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, their Adverſaries calumniate them for it, as if they intended to rebel againſt the Sovereign Powers that were over them. Our bleſſed Saviour and his Apoſtles were charged with Sedition for Preaching the Goſpel. And thus were the Primitive Chriſtians after them, accuſed by their Pagan Perſecutors for their Religious Aſſemblies, as deſigned to practiſe Sedition, and hatch miſchief. Many ſuch inſtances might be given: But all experience doth abundantly witneſs it, that the wiſeſt, holieſt, and moſt commendable Works that ever were wrought by Men, are liable to be thus perverted by the cunning malice of an imbittered Enemy. Ezra 4. 7. to 17. Neh. 2. 19. c. 6. 5, 6, 7.

2. The calumny that we are to encounter, is ſo groſly ſenſleſs and irrational, that to any conſiderate and impartial Eye it overthrows it ſelf. For whoſoever he be that deſigns to inſinuate himſelf into the minds of Men for his own advancement to rule over them,

must use such means for the attainment of his ends, as shall best comply with the humour of the multitude, and gratifie them in what they best like. But this is evident, that the greatest part of Men every where are at enmity with all seriousness and fervency in Religion, and cry it down, as not suiting with their careless worldly temper. They best relish such a dull kind of outside, heartless Devotion, as may stand with the quiet enjoyment of their lusts, and not disturb their dead and sleepy Consciences: And therefore the less life and vigour there is in those exercises of Religion, wherein they think good to bear a part, the more pleasing they are to them: they dread all other as much as a Child doth the sound of a Trumpet, or the terrible crack of Thunder, as that which amazes and affrights them, and breaks them of their beloved ease. Who is there that looks abroad in the World, and sees not this? And therefore whenever any have harden'd themselves into the confidence of casting reproaches upon such as are observed

ved to be moſt hearty and fervent in the Worſhip of God, they uſually have the *Vogue* of the profane multitude to ſide with them; and are by that advantage embolden'd more freely to pour out their venom, though ſometimes they run ſo far beyond all bounds of Candor, Modeſty and Truth, that they give the deepeſt wounds to their own reputation in the eſteem of thoſe who are ſober and ingenuous.

Did the Perſons thus accuſed take to themſelves the honour of what good they have or do; or did they endeavour or attempt to gain or exerciſe any Dominion over the Faith or Conſciences of their Brethren, there might be ſome better colour for this Imputation. But it is evident to all, that they diſown all ſuch ſelf-admiring and ſelf-exalting conceits, making themſelves Servants to all, in order to the furtherance of their Maſters honour, to whom they deſire to ſacrifice all they have, not ſeeking their own emolument or advancement, but the profit of many, that they may be ſaved. 3.

But it's uſual with thoſe, whoſe Worldly Intereſt is their *Summa Ratio*, to meaſure others by themſelves, and to lay that at the doors of thoſe whom they diſtaſte, which they are conſcious of in their own hearts, and which every one can diſcern to be too conſpicuous in their lives. I ſhall conclude this with thoſe words of the Apoſtle, *Judge nothing before the time, till the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and will make manifeſt the counſels of the hearts, and then ſhall every Man have praiſe of God.*

1 Cor. 4. 5.

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